

# Newsletter

## Highwood Primary School Issue no.67

December 2024

'Where Individuals Matter'

Dear Parents/Carers,

Whenever it gets to the stage of writing a newsletter, I am always amazed at how quickly time flies. We are already a third of the way through this academic year and it still feels like yesterday that the children were starting in their new classes!

The Christmas term is always jam-packed with excitement and the balance between keeping children on track with their learning whilst also embracing the festive season is always a challenge to get right.

You will see from this edition of the newsletter all the exciting learning opportunities that the children have had this term, as well as the fun activities we are able to provide to enrich their experiences. We are really pleased with the progress the children are making and the updates to the curriculum we have made have had a really positive impact.

During this term we have had two external reviews: One focussed on writing and the other focussed on Teaching and Learning. The feedback in the reports was really positive - to give you a snapshot of some of the comments:



***The children were enthusiastic about writing at Highwood and spoke very positively about their lessons.***

***The children told us that they were proud of their writing and were very keen to show it to us. They like having their writing published and sharing it with other members of the school community.***

***Pupils enjoy their learning, are respectful, polite and speak enthusiastically about their learning.***

***Routines are strong and children know what is expected.***

***Relationships with pupils are strong and personable. Staff know children very well.***

### Staffing update

There are a few staffing changes that will be taking place at Highwood in the new year:

**F2:** Miss Hargreaves will be leaving us at the end of this term and Miss Grainger will be taking on the teaching responsibility for the class.

**Year 2:** Miss Hughes starts her maternity leave in January and we are delighted to welcome Mr Gauld who will join the Year 2 teaching team.

**Year 3:** Mrs Inwards will be taking over the class teaching responsibility from Mrs Welsh. Mrs Welsh will then return to her full time leadership role and add much needed capacity into Senior Leadership Team.

If I don't get to see you before the end of term I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Thank you for your support.

Matt Hickey

Head Teacher





# Governing Body News

Dear Parent and Carers

## **Orchard Learning Alliance (OLA) – Progress so far**

The journey toward joining the OLA has seen significant strides, marked by meticulous planning, resource allocation, and collaborative efforts from the community of schools involved. Engaging stakeholders and garnering support have been integral aspects of this progress. We are gathering pace moving towards our transition date in Spring 2025 and will share more information in the New Year.

## **Welcome to New Parent Governor – Mike Dangerfield**

We are delighted to welcome Mike Dangerfield as our new school governor. With a wealth of experience in HR and a passion for furthering Highwood's success, Mike is committed to enhancing our school's community and supporting our mission. Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Mike!

## **Parental & Community Engagement**

If you would like to share any information or feedback for the Governors, please complete this form:

<https://forms.office.com/r/n3L972NxxV>

As we conclude this autumn term, the governors want to extend heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated school staff, supportive parents, and enthusiastic children for your unwavering efforts and commitment to learning and growth. We wish each of you a joyful and restful holiday season. Take this time to recharge, celebrate with loved ones, and return in the new year with renewed energy.

We've put together a few activities for the kids to enjoy, thank you for being an essential part of our school family, and here's to a well-deserved and delightful Christmas break for all!

## **Highwood Governors**

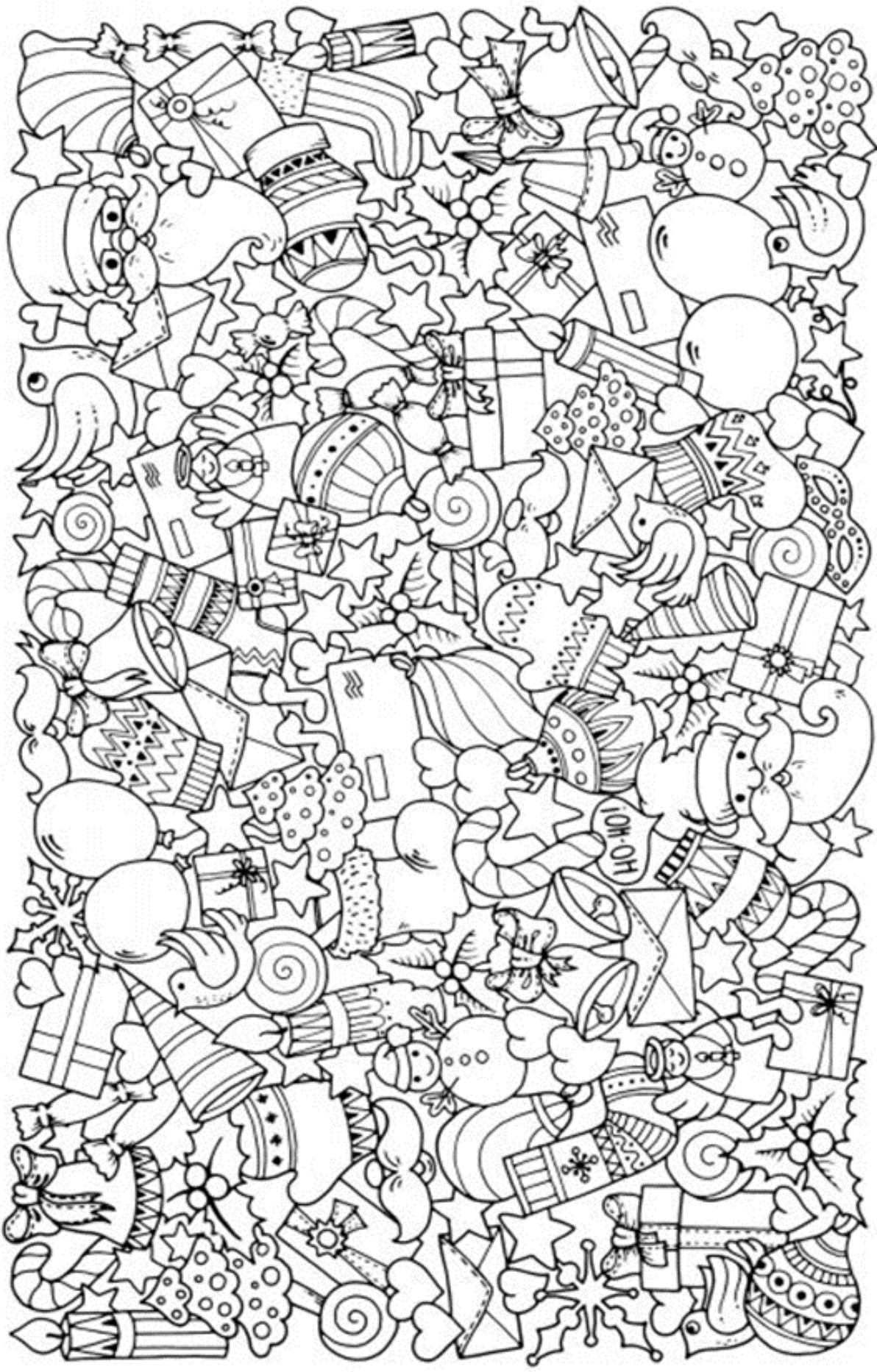
**Best Wishes from the Highwood Governors**

## Highwood Christmas Puzzle



L	C	H	R	I	S	T	M	A	S
A	H	I	G	H	W	O	O	D	P
T	O	Y	S	H	M	E	N	V	L
N	C	S	W	E	E	T	S	E	G
A	K	B	M	R	R	U	G	N	S
S	N	U	T	E	Y	N	D	T	M
O	S	L	O	R	A	C	A	O	F
P	Y	D	O	O	F	R	G	H	N

- \* Christmas   \* Advent   \* Food
- \* Carols   \* Highwood   \* Toys
- \* Star   \* Tree   \* Sweets
- \* Santa   \* Angel   \* Fayre





# Foundation 1 News

Mrs Atkinson

Mrs Vanka, Mrs Bailey, Mrs Cooper, Miss Teader and Mrs Poulton

## ‘What makes us special?’

Welcome to our Foundation 1 News. We have had a very busy second half of the Autumn Term in F1. We have been continuing to explore our termly topic **‘What makes us special?’** by looking at our senses of touch, taste, smell and hearing.



We have learnt about the senses which we use every day – taste and hearing. We learnt all about firework night and the different sounds we might hear. The children have also been focusing on listening in phonics, learning to distinguish between different sounds they hear with their ears. As part of our Little Wandle Love of Reading, we’ve read *Meg and Mog*, *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* and revisited some old favourites from last half term.

Our favourite sense was our sense of taste! We explored the four parts of taste - salty, bitter, sweet and sour. Sweet food is our favourite but we disliked the bitter taste. We also tasted some new kinds of fruit and made our own fruit kebabs. The children made shopping lists to make sure Mrs Atkinson bought the right ingredients. We also had a pizza restaurant roleplay.



We’ve also enjoyed learning about Halloween and Bonfire Night which some of our children celebrate with their families. We made pumpkin soup and decorated pumpkin biscuits. We made firework and spooky sounds in phonics and we’ve collected some pumpkin seeds to plant in Spring. The children especially loved the breadstick sparklers! Yummy!

And of course, who can forget our fabulous Welly Walk! The weather was kind this year and we noticed that many trees still had leaves on. We used our super observation skills to complete an Autumn scavenger hunt and collected lots of natural objects to use them in our craft and messy play activities too. Thank you so much to the grown-ups who gave up their afternoon to help us.



As we are coming towards the end of the term, we are doing all things Christmas! The children have been busy rehearsing for their play *‘Whoops-a-Daisy Angel’* which we are very excited to share with parents and also engaging in lots of Christmas/winter themed activities and crafts. The children also enjoyed their Christmas party and Christmas lunch and decorating the classroom.

Thank you to all the parents that have supported us during this half of term and we look forward to welcoming the children back after the Christmas break!

**Don’t forget to look on Seesaw to see what we are up to each week!**

**Follow us on X (formerly known as Twitter) @HighwoodPrimF1**



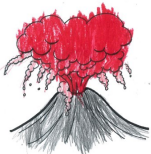
# Foundation 2 News

## Miss Hargreaves, Mrs Parker and Miss Grainger

Miss Webb, Mrs Vanka, Miss Finch, Mrs Newham

Welcome to the Foundation Stage Newsletter! It has been such a busy and exciting half term, continuing with our topic question 'Could dinosaurs live in Woodley?', and with all of our other learning - take a look!

Volcano

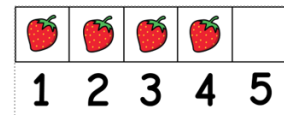


### Topic

We started the term looking at the different ways that dinosaurs move; we compared animals that we see today who resembled dinosaurs and discussed extinction and how it might have happened. We really enjoyed learning about dinosaurs this term!

### Maths

In maths, the F2 children have been learning about numbers 1 to 5. We have practised subitising, representing and showing the composition of each number. We have also looked at 2D Shapes (Circle, Triangle and 4 sided shapes), talking about what we notice and trying to spot shapes in the environment!



Phase 2 Sound Mat



### Phonics/Writing

This term we have been continuing on with our phase 2 phonic sounds. We have made so much progress this term with our sound recognition, blending, prosody and composition.

We have also been learning how to form each sound, and beginning to write words and simple sentences!

### Whoops-a-daisy Angel

The children have been fabulous with practising the songs, actions and words for this years nativity of Whoops-a-daisy Angel. We hope that you enjoy our performance as much as we enjoyed practising for it.



Thank you to all the parents that have supported us this half term and **we wish you a very Merry Christmas and look forward to seeing you all in the New Year!**

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# Year 1 News

## Miss Bolger, Mrs Garner and Miss Ahmed

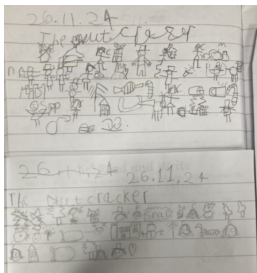
Mrs Wheeler, Mrs Swamiraj, Miss Mubashar and Miss Craker

Year 1 have had a fantastic Autumn term. We have seen the children put so much effort into all of their work over the past few weeks and they have shown our Learning Behaviours really well.

### Where In The World Am I?

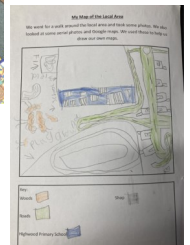
#### English

This term we have been securing our use of capital letters, full stops and finger spaces. We have also been trying hard to use a variety of adjectives in our writing. We have been using Colourful Semantics to make sure our sentences make sense. Our writing has been based around the story of The Nutcracker. We loved making story maps and acting out the story!



#### Geography

In Geography we have been learning about different types of maps. We enjoyed exploring maps and then drawing our own maps of our playground and the local area. We have learnt about the compass points too. We have learnt about the weather too and loved making wind socks to measure the wind speed and direction.



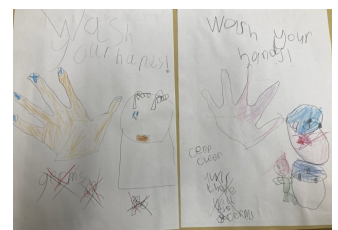
#### Computing

In Computing we have been learning about Creating Media and we have focussed on Digital Painting. We have learnt to log on to the laptops and have used Paint to create our pictures. We have shown a lot of perseverance and independence to remember how to log on.



#### PSHE

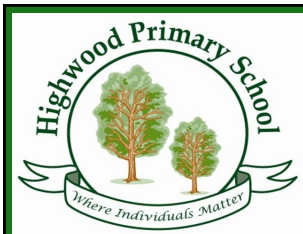
In PSHE we have been learning about our bodies and how to keep them healthy. We have learnt about healthy eating, good routines and looking after our teeth. We have also learnt about the importance of washing our hands to stop spreading germs.



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@HighwoodPrim1BA

@HighwoodPrim1G



# Year 2 News

Miss Anderson, Miss Hughes

Miss White, Mrs Moore, Mrs Aswal and Mrs Craker

It's hard to believe that another 7 weeks have whizzed by. We have been very busy this half term continuing to learn about The Great Fire of London and re-hersing for our Nativity. All the Year 2 children have continued to display an excellent work ethic and have showcased their learning brilliantly.

## Was The Great Fire of London a total disaster?

### History



This term, our children have been delving into the life of Samuel Pepys and exploring why he remains a significant historical figure. They had great fun

researching fascinating facts about him.

### Science

The children have had a fantastic time investigating various materials and their suitability for different purposes. Along the way, they've expanded their vocabulary and deepened their understanding of material properties.

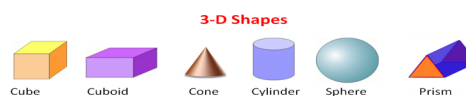
### Nativity

Our children took great pride in leading the Nativity this year. They delivered their lines brilliantly and thoroughly enjoyed singing the festive songs. It was a delightful performance that showcased their hard work and enthusiasm!



### Maths

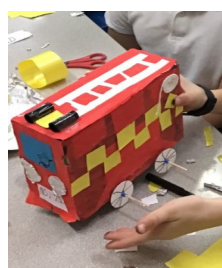
The children have been busy mastering the methods of addition and subtraction including exchanging. They also had a great time exploring shapes, learning all about 2D and 3D forms.



### Design and Technology

This term the children embarked on an exciting project to create their very own toy fire engine vehicles. Through this hands-on activity, they explored the mechanics of axles and wheels, gaining valuable insights into how these components work together.

In a wonderful display of teamwork, they collaborated with Year 5 students to bring their moving toy fire engines to life. It was a fantastic learning experience for everyone involved!



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@HighwoodPrim2H

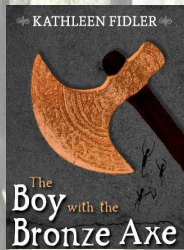
### ***What did pre-historic people yabba dabba do?***

#### **Reading and Writing**

The children have had lots of exciting writing opportunities! The children produced their own non-chronological reports about what life was like in the Stone Age making sure to organise the information under subheadings. The children have also been learning about recounts and have been preparing to write a recount about their Stone Age Day which will involve many features such as subordinate clauses, fronted adverbials, questions and exclamations. We have also really enjoyed reading 'The Boy with the Bronze Axe' and gaining a greater understanding of the pre-historic times and of the mystery of Skara Brae!

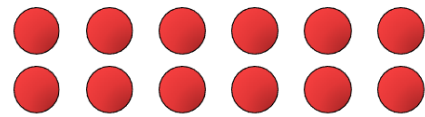
#### **Topic**

What did prehistoric people yabba dabba do? We have been learning lots about how change has occurred over time and how prehistoric people were constantly inventing and creating new tools to make life easier - we even compared this with modern day! The children have also been learning about Stonehenge and have been wondering why it was made. Et la francais? C'est super! We have even been learning about Ancient Britain in French!



#### **Maths**

We have been trying so hard with our maths column addition and subtraction. We have now begun to work on multiplication and division. We have used arrays to help us.



$$6 \times 2 = 12$$

#### **Science**

We have been learning all about bodies in science, focusing on skeletons. We discovered the different type of skeleton names, and that some animals even have skeletons on the outside of their bodies! We have also been thinking about why humans and animals need food.

Je suis un homme  
de l'âge de la pierre. 

J'ai un silex. 

J'habite dans  
une grotte. 



*Follow us on X (formerly know as Twitter)*

@HighwoodPrim3R

@HighwoodPrim3WH



# Year 4 News

Mrs Partridge, Mr Williams

Mrs Nice, Miss Briggs and Mrs Hillier

**Welcome to the second edition of the Year 4 news! All the Year 4 children have continued to take pride in their learning and have produced some amazing work. Please read on to find out about the incredible learning the children have been doing!**

## What is More Precious - water or gold?

In Year 4 we have continued our investigation into the Ancient Egyptians and how their wealth and the river Nile were important to their rise to power and success as a civilisation.

We learned all about why the River Nile was so important to the Egyptians, explored an Egyptian textile Khayamiya and have learnt about mummification!

Thank you to all of the parents who came to the Maths SPLAT event! The children loved learning with you.

## Maths

In maths this term the children explored and concreted their understanding of addition and subtraction of 4 digit numbers and have been challenged to multiple exchanges within one calculation. We continued our work on addition and subtraction to find answers to multistep problems. We then investigated different techniques in working out timetables we didn't know. Their timetables knowledge has come so far over the past few weeks but any extra practise that could be squeezed in on the school run or at home would be beneficial!

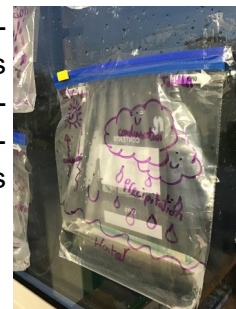
## English

In our writing, we have been creating excellent setting descriptions, full of adjectives, similes, personification and an assortment of fronted adverbial phrases. We had a fantastic time using the VR headsets to 'visit' Egypt and use what we explored to describe the senses. We have pulled all of this learning together with show don't tell emotions and can't wait to see our final published work!



Year 4 have continued reading 'Secrets of a Sun King' and the class have loved the excitement and adventure within the story.

We have been improving our predicting skills for what we think is going to happen next and summaries of chapters to help us remember all the key events throughout the book.



## Science

As scientists we have continued to investigate states of matter. We particularly enjoyed our two investigations: one where we melted ice, butter and chocolate; the other where we created a water-cycle-in-a-bag and we saw water evaporate! Spending a whole term exploring states of matter has really helped us consolidate all of our understanding.

## Art

As artists we have looked at the Egyptian textile Khayamiya. The children created their own elaborate patterns in the Egyptian styles and painted them onto fabric. We've used our sewing skills from DT to sew a channel using running stitch ready to insert a dowel rod. This will help our beautiful tapestries to hang properly. We've found this whole process really exciting!



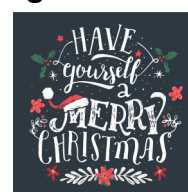
## Design and Technology

We have been extremely creative in D&T this term. The children designed a logo for Ancient Egypt, practiced their sewing skills into binca and used these successfully in their art!

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**@HighwoodPrim4P**

**@HighwoodPrim4W**





# Year 5 News

Mrs Downes, Mrs Hind,

Mrs Lakshmanan, Mrs Rodroju and

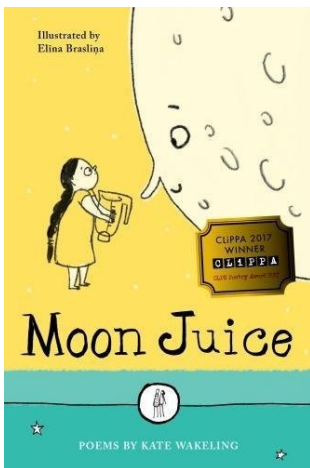
Mrs Kamath

## Has our Earth finished evolving?

Welcome to the second edition of the Year 5 news! There's been lots of new learning going on. Please read on to find out more!

### English

During the second part of the Autumn Term, we began by studying the poems of Kate Wakeling and learnt about different styles and features of poetry. This ended with a very exciting Poetry Slam where everyone performed their own space-themed poem. We then moved on to focusing on writing newspaper reports, linked to the moon landing, and will publish our newspaper articles like real journalists.



### Maths

We've been looking at the four operations including looking at 'special numbers', such as prime numbers, multiples and factors. We have also begun to exploring fractions: find equivalent fractions, converting between improper fractions and mixed numbers, comparing fractions and adding and subtracting fractions - phew!

### Science and Key Question Lessons

The space-theme continues with our Key Question 'Has Our Earth Finished Evolving?' We learnt about the planets, the earth's orbit and the Lunar Cycle, and why there is life on Earth. We also used our knowledge of gravity and air resistance to build and test parachutes for an egg (with varied success!)

### Year 5 OLA Challenge

We have joined up with some of the other schools in the Orchard Learning Alliance to take part in the OLA Challenge. Through this new project, children will be able to try new things and develop their character. The challenges fall into the following categories: 'Our Community', 'Our Skills', 'Our Health' and 'Our Environment'. Within each section there is a range of tasks for children to complete. Once completed they can get these signed off by their Class Teacher in order to achieve milestone awards:

· If a child completes 8 tasks they will receive a Bronze award, given by their class teacher

· If a child completes 16 tasks they will receive a Silver award, given by the Head Teacher

· If a child completes 20 tasks they will receive a Gold award, which will be awarded to them in an award ceremony hosted by Waingels School in May 2025

We are really looking forward to seeing all of the amazing things the children get involved in this year.



*It has been lots of fun so far and we look forward to continuing this hard work after Christmas!*

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**@HighwoodPrim5D**

**@HighwoodPrim5H**



# Year 6 News

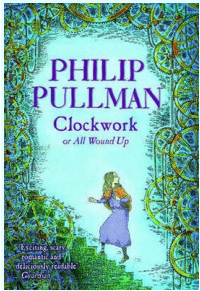
Mr Robinson, Miss Bicheno

Mrs Panahpoori, Mr Edwards, Mrs Rajpal and Ms Yu

Looking back over this Autumn Term, we can't believe how much we have learnt and done. We have continued to address our question '**Does Change Always Lead to Progress?**' through English, History, Science and the Arts. Year 6 would like to wish a Happy Christmas to all our families and friends.

## English

In Reading, we have finished Cogheart and are now studying a fantastic book, 'Clockwork', by Philip Pullman. It is a gothic fairy story in which invented characters come to life. The story actually has two separate plot lines that gradually weave into each other. Each plot has its own twists and turns, and its own element of suspense. We have thoroughly enjoyed learning the macabre and sinister vocabulary in the story.



When writing, we have studied the life of children during the Victorian era through a story called 'Street Child' and re-written one of the chapters. The children used incredible language and integrated dialogue to show the differences between the characters.

## Maths

We have continued to hone our arithmetic skills and use them to solve mathematical problems. We have had a huge focus on skills involving fractions: addition and subtraction of fractions, multiplying and dividing; and fractions of an amount. The children have worked incredibly hard and have made excellent progress.

## Science

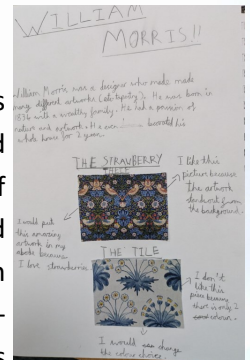
In Science, we have been focused on the classification of animals and plants as first introduced during our SPLAT session. The children have thoroughly enjoyed learning about how to identify different creatures/plants, especially when sweets were involved in an experiment.

## History

As historians, we studied the impact that canals and railways had on the people of Britain. And asked, whether they were a change for good or bad?

## Art

We have been looking at the works of the artist William Morris and how his contemporary designs of wallpaper and textiles inspired those around him. We shall soon be finishing this topic with a cross-stitching design inspired by his work.



## PE

In PE, we have been focusing on invasion games, including handball and basketball. We have continued with swimming, being a key component of the curriculum and some children have enjoyed regular lessons at Blue Coat School this term.

## Other Events

We have also been incredibly lucky this term to have been invited to the Waingals production of Annie; to have had a writing workshop delivered by Alex from Igniting Writing; to have had an RE workshop delivered by RE Inspired; and to have had the opportunity to take part in bikeability. The Year 6 children have had a very busy and enjoyable term.



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# The Grove

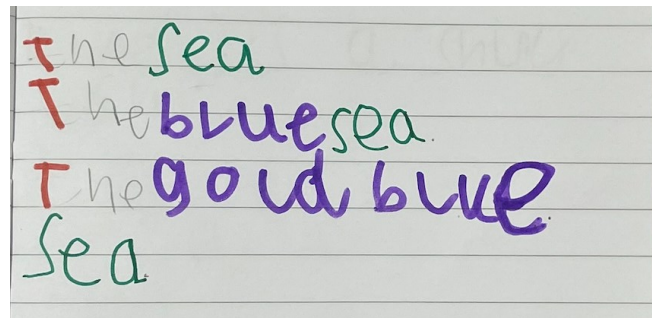
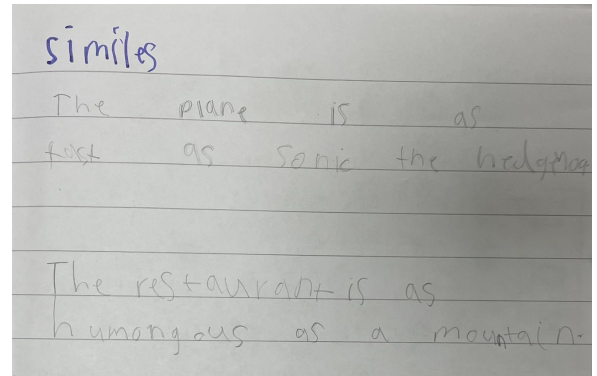
## Speech and Language Resource News

Miss Barrett, Mrs Payne, Mrs Gale, Mrs Harris and Mrs Nielsen

### Literacy: Find Your Happy - My Happy World

This term the children have been creating their ideal 'Happy World'. They have identified what their happy looks like and what would be in their world. We have investigated and secured our knowledge in expanded noun phrases, prepositional phrases, alliteration and similes. They have loved doing their worlds so much that they wanted to create a whole new world and write another paragraph based on this. I have been so proud of their independence of identifying their key features and developing these with their vocabulary for in their new world.

Their paragraphs are incredible and we cannot wait to share with you on coffee morning!

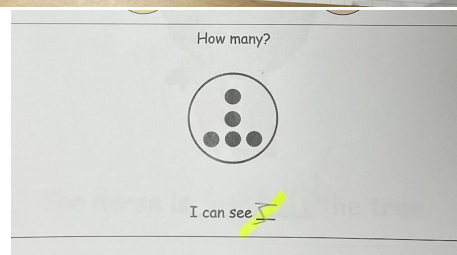
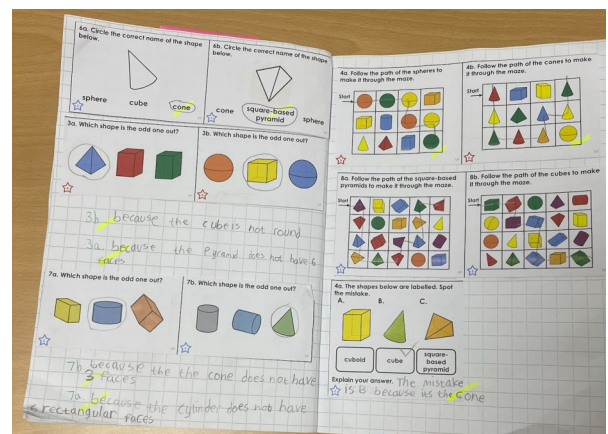


### Maths: Number bonds to 20, fractions and 3D shapes

This term some of the children have been preserving with the dreaded fractions! To all of their surprise, they have conquered halves, quarters and thirds. Along with some of them being able to find a fraction of a quantity! We have also investigated 3D shapes and their properties.

Others in The Grove have been working on their place value and numbers within 20. Including, ordering, counting forward, counting backwards and finding numbers bonds within and up to 20.

They have all been working incredibly hard!



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**@HighwoodPrimR**

We all wish you a well deserved Christmas break and look forward to welcoming you back in the New Year.



# PE/Sports News

Mr Edwards, Mr Hutchings &  
Miss Coleman

**Welcome** to the final half term "PE & Sports News Page" of 2024. I will endeavour to continue to keep the children and parents informed about our recent achievements in sports tournaments, what we have been learning in PE, **PE Kit required**, after school clubs and of course the future sports dates.

## PE Lessons:

This half term the children have been learning about the games of Hockey, Netball, Ball Skills, Football, Tag Rugby, Handball & Basketball so a huge focus on Hand-Eye Co-ordination, pass & receive, striking, teamwork, target and agility.

Over the last 7 weeks we have been developing our skills in these games in preparation for the tournaments which have been held this term and also run into the Spring Term. The development that has occurred this term in all lessons has been fantastic.



2H have also had an extra session taking part in Dance lessons with Miss Coleman. This is still proving to be a fantastic hit with the children of all ages, boys and girls plus they have been learning a new Christmas themed dance.

What has also been a highlight has been the effort and enthusiasm from many of the children.

Year 6R (Group 1) have enjoyed a fabulous 4 weeks in the pool learning or improving their swimming techniques and Self Rescue activities. Many children are showing amazing bravery overcoming their fears of either the water, lifting feet or even swimming in the deep end!

The smiles and excitement from the children makes it all so worthwhile and we are forever grateful for the opportunity Blue Coat School gives us in using their facilities.



## Sporting After School Clubs:

This Half term we have been able to continue to run the much loved clubs across the school including boys football with professional footballer Louis Hutchings and we endeavour to give every opportunity we can to as many children as possible. There will be new clubs in the spring term :

### Tuesdays:

KS2 Girls Football - **Mr Edwards**

### Wednesdays:

Year 4,5 & 6 Girls Netball - **Mr Edwards**

Year 5/6 Boys Football - **Mr Hutchings**

### Thursdays:

Year 3/4 Winter Sports - **Mr Edwards.**

As ever, these clubs attract large numbers and long waiting lists, remember, if children sign up for a club they **must persist for the whole term.**

## Final Autumn Half Term Matches & Tournaments:

This half term we were fortunate enough to venture out into the community for both Football & Tag Rugby.

## Wokingham Primary Schools FA.

After completing the boys team league games last half term, we were able to complete all of the girls matches this half term. Despite missing some key players in our opening match vs Loddon, the girls worked really hard putting the knowledge gained in after school club to good use. Our 2nd game was a very tight match ending 6-5 to Colleton. Our final game saw us dominate vs Charvil Piggot winning comfortably and demonstrating how much we have improved. The girls move onto the cup competition next term.



# PE/Sports News

Mr Edwards, Mr Hutchings &  
Miss Coleman

## Highwood Girls Football Team



A lovely end to the term was a "B Team" event vs Charvil Piggott for the boys that attend our after school club but have not represented Highwood in the "A Team". Lots and lots of substitutions and great fun had by both teams. We hope to run this event again in the future.

## Wokingham Schools Tag Rugby Event

9 schools competed in a round robin of games, 10 minutes each game. They were Hawkedon, Highwood, Colleton, Loddon, Willowbank, Oaklands, Aldrynton, Robert Piggott & Hillside. All of the teams performed amazingly. They ran, passed & scored lots of Try's. I was also pleased to see parents supporting their children. I always like to encourage this when possible so please come along if your child is selected.

## Highwood Tag Rugby Team



## Next Half Term:-

**PE Lessons:- Invasion Games (Basketball, football, handball) & Gymnastics**

**Swimming:- 6R Group 2**

**Dance:- 1G**

**Next Term Competitions:-**

**Six Nations Rugby league**

**WPSFA 5/6 Football League**

**Spring Term School Games including:-**

**Ten Pin Bowling, In2Hockey, Badminton & New Age Kurling**

**Handball & Basketball House Games.**

## Outside School Gallery



Congratulations to Ivy in year 2 who has completed level 2 in her swimming lessons and level 5 in Gymnastics. This is an amazing achievement!

## PE Kit.

**PE Kit required:-**Shorts, Highwood PE T-Shirt, Black Plain Tracksuit, trainers.

**No Earrings! Please remember 1st week in summer holidays only for new piercings just in case it's on your list you have sent to Santa!**



Please ensure your child has a plain black tracksuit consisting of both long trousers and a long sleeved top as it is too cold for them this time of year to be dressed in shorts and a t-shirt!

It just remains for me to wish you all a very happy and safe Christmas break.  
Mr Edwards.

*Follow us on X (formerly know as Twitter)*

**@HighwoodPrimPE**





# Family Centre News



My role in school is to provide support, advice and information to the families within our school community. I can help you with any worries that you may have in relation to your child's education, behaviour and wellbeing. I am also here as someone to talk to if you need it. I can meet with you in school at a time to suit yourself. Or we could chat on the phone or have an online meeting. I am (almost) always on the Woodland Avenue gate at the start and end of the school day. Advice and support is confidential - although concerns relating to the safeguarding of children will always be dealt with in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. I may not have all the answers, but hopefully I can help you to work out how to find them! **Lucy Morris, Family Support Worker.**

**It's been a busy second half of the Autumn term in the family centre. We have held:**

- **2 coffee mornings**, open to all parents and carers including a Christmas one! If you haven't attended one yet please come along to say hi to other parents and take some time out for yourself from your busy lives.
- **1 SEN Support coffee morning** for parents and carers of children who have special educational needs, either diagnosed or on pathways or for parents who have early concerns. Parents who attended have shared how good it has been to begin to develop networks with other parents and have the opportunity to learn about what support is out there.
- **A supportive toilet training workshop** to support parents and carers with this journey, looking at ways to make this successful. We will be repeating this next term.
- **A Christmas jumper swap shop** to reduce waste, save money and save the planet!
- **Dr. Bike and the team from Avanti** conducted free bike maintenance sessions and the Bikeability programme for our Year 6 students.
- **And lots of** individual meetings with parents and carers, brain storming and trouble shooting issues of concern for them and their children.

**We also completed our first Parent Gym programme in school. Thank you to all that attended and took time out of their busy lives to work at the most important job in the world—parenting. Here's what some of our parents had to say:**

*Thank you so much for the wonderful Parent Gym sessions! It was a lovely opportunity to brainstorm ideas, reflect, and grow as a parent. The sessions have truly inspired me to become a better parent and person.*

*On the first Monday, I was overwhelmed with work as a mompreneur, but since I had committed to this journey, I stayed true to my word—and I'm so glad I did! It turned out to be an investment in myself. Not only did I gain valuable insights on parenting, but I also experienced significant personal development.*

I am very interested in your suggestions of how we can best support our families and build beneficial parent engagement please email me at [FSW@highwood.wokingham.sch.uk](mailto:FSW@highwood.wokingham.sch.uk)



Follow me on X  
(formerly known as  
Twitter)  
[@FSWHighwood](https://twitter.com/FSWHighwood)





# SENCO

Dear Families,

It has been great seeing all the Foundation and KS1 pupils enjoying rehearsing their Nativity performances and enjoying Christmas jumper day and Christmas dinner. While for some children, Christmas can be an exciting and enjoyable time of year, others may find the changes to routine and normality challenging. At school, we have put in support to assist pupils in the last few weeks of the Autumn term, including whenever possible sticking to our familiar school timetable, clear visual timetables, warning of changes and social stories. Below, I have added links to advice for supporting SEND pupils at Christmas.

I hope you all have an enjoyable Winter break and a Merry Christmas to all who celebrate.

Lindsay Padbury

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)



Lindsay Padbury - Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) A special educational need/ and or disability (SEND) can cause barriers to a child's learning. My role in school is to identify the children's strengths and manage any extra needs they may have. I liaise with teachers and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) to help support the pupil's needs and discuss appropriate actions that will help reduce any barriers to their learning. If you have any

Here are some services you can access for additional SEND support.

## **Supporting SEND at Christmas**

[CSG 2023 \(snapcharity.org\)](https://www.snapcharity.org/)

[10 Tips for Enjoyable Christmas with a Child with SEN | SENSational Tutors](#)

[Seven tips for a calm Christmas for children with special needs - Special Needs Jungle](#)

[This Christmas, teach children the wonderful life skill of cooking, with Food – a fact of life • SEN Magazine](#)

[Wokingham Directory | Local Offer What's On for children and young people with additional needs](#)



## **Speech and Language support**



[Home - Afasic](#)

[Words for Life | National Literacy Trust | Words for Life](#)

[Learning to talk 3 to 5 years - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/)

## **Sensory Processing**

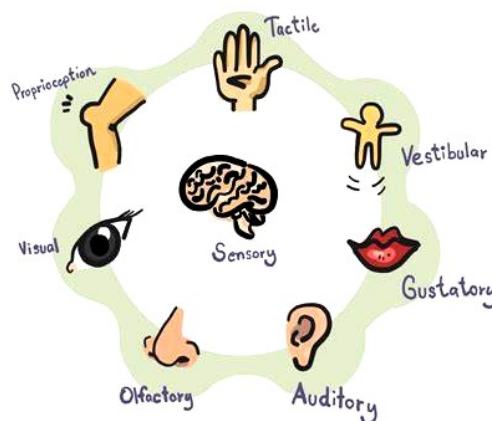
[What is Sensory Processing? - YouTube](#)

[Sensory Processing: The Tactile \(touch\) System - YouTube](#)

[Sensory processing: Body awareness \(proprioception\) - YouTube](#)

[Sensory processing: movement and balance \(the vestibular system\) - YouTube](#)

[Sensory Processing: Alertness Levels - YouTube](#)





# SENCO

## Local SEND Support

[Local Offer for 0 - 25 year olds with additional needs - Wokingham Borough Council](#)

[Homepage \(sendiasswokingham.org.uk\)](http://sendiasswokingham.org.uk) free, confidential, impartial advice, guidance and support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

[Children with additional needs \(CAN\) network - Wokingham Borough Council](#)

[Home Page - PSC \(parentingspecialchildren.co.uk\)](http://parentingspecialchildren.co.uk)

[Home | Camp Mohawk](#) a multi-functional day centre for children with special needs and their families, set in 5 acres of beautiful countryside, just outside Wargrave, Berkshire.

## Family and adult Support

[Wokingham Borough Council family support](#)

[Young Sibs](#) for siblings

[Talking Therapies](#) self-refer for support with emotional and mental health (17years and above)

[Samaritans are available 24/7](#) to listen, even if you just need someone to listen whilst offload, they don't have to provide advice unless you ask for it.



you

[Parenting and mental health](#) – the Mental Health Foundation

## Mental Health

[little-blue-book-of-sunshine.pdf \(berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk\)](http://little-blue-book-of-sunshine.pdf)

## Sleep Issues, Anxiety and Behaviour Support

FIRST [Wokingham Directory | Family Intervention Resources & Support Team \(FIRST\)](#) - supporting families with sleep and behavioural issues

First Video: [Supporting children with disabilities - YouTube](#)

## Autism and ADHD Support

[Waiting times for ADHD and Autism Assessments](#)

[Right to Choose - ADHD UK](#)

[Centre for Autism - University of Reading Centre for Autism](#)

ASSIST Team [Wokingham Directory | ASSIST Team \(Autism Spectrum Service for Information Support and Training\)](#)



NEURODIVERSITYHUB

Assist video [Supporting autistic children and their families - YouTube](#)

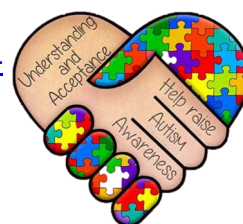
[Neurodiversity Hub - Resources for Students, Employers & More](#)

[Autism Berkshire Reading - Autism Berkshire](#)

[Neurodiversity News September 2023 \(newsweaver.com\)](#)

## Fine Motor Skills

[Fine Motor Skills | Children Young People and Families Online Resource \(berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk\)](#)





# SENCO



[www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo](http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/lo)

The SEND Local Offer webpages tell you about local support for children and young people aged 0 to 25, with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families.



Find out about:

- Support in nursery, school and college
- Local health and social care services
- Activities, groups and short breaks
- Preparing young people for adulthood

## Keep up to date

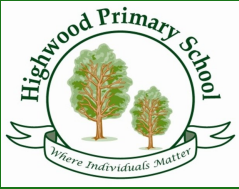
Sign up to the SEND Local Offer newsletter for regular updates about what's on for families.



## Contact us

If you need help to find information, or to give feedback about the Local Offer:

[localoffer@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:localoffer@wokingham.gov.uk)



# Attendance Matters

It certainly has been a challenging half term for attendance. Being at school everyday gives our children the very best chance of releasing their full potential. At this time of year, there is inevitably more colds, coughs and nasty bugs and you may have concerns as to whether your child is well enough to attend school.

Is your child too ill for school useful link

**REMEMBER**



[nhs link.htm](https://www.nhs.uk/healthlink)

- If you do keep your child at home, it is important to phone school daily ideally by 9.00am, stating the reason for the absence. You can also send a message via the school's Arbor APP.
- We welcome children if they feel better during the school day. Just give us a quick call to let us know when we expect you and bring a packed lunch if it is before lunchtime.
- If children are too unwell to be in school we will send them home so keep your phones available. If possible have a plan in place for last minute sick child care.
- Whenever possible try not to book medical appointments during the school day. If you can't avoid it, tell us in advance and collect your child as close to the appointment as possible. You may be asked to provide medical evidence which could be in the form of an appointment letter or text message, prescription or a photo of prescribed medication.
- We can only administer prescribed medication in school. You will need to bring it to our reception area in the morning and fill out a form.

## Tips for a healthy school year!

- \* Teach your children about the importance of handwashing, not sharing drinking bottles or food and personal space
- \* Get enough sleep
- \* Eat a healthy diet including a brain-boosting breakfast
- \* Keep children current on immunisations
- \* Keep children active



Missing a lot of school because of ill health can have a big impact not only on your child's education, but also on how they feel about school. If you need any advice or support please contact Lisa Hall, Attendance Officer or Lucy Morris, our Family Support Worker.





# Other News

## Big Friends

To support the children's understanding of community within the school, we are launching a new initiative called 'Big Friends' where older children are paired with younger children. Big Friends will support the younger children with their social skills and help the older children to put the needs of others before their own. Once paired up, the children stay as Big Friend/Little Friend until the older child leaves Year 6. The children will all get to know each other before the Christmas break and then will meet up regularly to read, complete activities or play together outside. We hope this will be the start of some beautiful friendships and be a great addition to the caring, community spirit at Highwood.

## New Books for the Library!

Mrs Yule has had a great time liaising with pupils and teachers about what books they would like and spending our rewards from the book fair! Look out for these books soon in the library and enjoy reading them!





# Friends of Highwood

Thank you so much for supporting Friends of Highwood's events this half term, whether that has been through volunteering or helping with preparations, your help has been invaluable. It's been a successful first term with some fantastic events for our families to enjoy.

We have moved to working in subcommittees – with different, smaller, groups dedicated to the disco, winter fayre, and social events – which has made planning and organising much more manageable.

If you'd like to get involved and help shape our upcoming events, please email [chairFOH@highwood.wokingham.sch.uk](mailto:chairFOH@highwood.wokingham.sch.uk).

Together, we've raised an incredible £3,650 for the school this term and have more discos, uniform sales and parent socials planned for the new year. Please keep an eye out for communication about these events in the school emails and bulletins, and our Facebook page so you and your child don't miss out on these.

We hope everyone has a wonderful Christmas!

**Facebook:** Friends of Highwood

**Instagram:** @friends\_of\_highwood\_primary

**Follow us on X (formerly know as Twitter) :** @HighwoodFOH





# Reminders



## SCHOOL UNIFORM

School uniform can be purchased direct from our supplier Michael Hope at the following [link](#)

Please note there is a delivery charge of **£4.95** to home up until Easter.



## SCHOOL DINNERS

Children in Reception, Years 1 & 2 are entitled to universal free school meals, funded by the government. If your child would like a school dinner please let the class teacher know and this will be booked for them.

Children in Nursery, Years 3 to 6 are required to pay for dinners. The price of a school dinner is to **£2.65 per day** . Payment should be made via Arbor in advance.

If you think your child may be eligible for benefits related free school meals please contact the school office for a form.



## ABSENCE

Please contact the school office by **9.30am** if your child is absent stating the reason for the absence. This can be done via the Arbor Portal/APP or by phone on 0118 9265493.

If your child is going to be late and requires a hot dinner this must be booked by **9.30am**.

All requests for leave of absence must be made on the absence form available from the school office. Routine appointments should be made outside of school time.



## EARRINGS

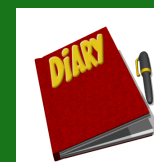
Please note that our school policy is for earrings to be removed for PE, for the health and safety of the children.

It is recommended that ear piercing is only done in the first week of the summer holidays to allow the time for them to settle.

Please ensure that your child has practised taking them out as well.



# Diary Dates



Please find a list of forthcoming dates

<b>Monday 23 December — Friday 3 January 2025</b>	<b>Christmas Holidays</b>
<b>Monday 6 January 2025</b>	<b>Inset Day - School closed for staff training</b>
<b>Tuesday 7 January</b>	<b>School starts for all children</b>
Friday 10 January	Coffee Morning — All welcome — 8.45am-10am
Monday 13 January	Year 4 Roman Workshop
Friday 24 January	SEN Support Coffee Morning — 8.45am-10am
Wednesday 29 January	Year 1 trip to Milestones Museum
Friday 31 January	Year 6B— Parent Class Assembly — 2.30pm
Thursday 6 February	F2P — Parent Class Assembly — 2.30pm
Friday 7 February	Coffee Morning — All welcome — 8.45am-10am
Friday 7 February	Year 5D — Parent Class Assembly — 2.30pm
Monday 10 February	1 Pyjama Day
Monday 10 February	F1 Story Session for Parents — 3.15pm-4pm
Wednesday 12 February	Woodley Cluster Year 5 Bake-Off (selected pupils)
Thursday 13 February	Parent Book Look — 3.15pm — 3.45pm
<b>Friday 14 February</b>	<b>Inset Day - School closed for staff training</b>
<b>Monday 17 — Friday 21 February</b>	<b>Half Term</b>
Monday 24 February	School starts for all children
Thursday 27 February	F2G — Parent Class Assembly — 2.30pm
Friday 28 February	Coffee Morning — All welcome — 8.45am-10am
Friday 28 February	Year 4W — Parent Class Assembly — 2.30pm
Thursday 6 March	World Book Day
Thursday 6 March	Year 2H — Parent Class Assembly — 2.30pm
Friday 7 March	Year 6R — Parent Class Assembly —2.30pm
Friday 7 March	Reports out to parents
Thursday 13 March	Year 1BA — Parent Class Assembly — 2.30pm
Friday 14 March	SEN Support Coffee Morning — 8.45am-10am
Friday 14 March	Year 5H — Parent Class Assembly — 2.30pm
Thursday 20 March	Year 2A — Parent Class Assembly — 2.30pm
Friday 21 March	Red Nose Day
Friday 21 March	Year 4P — Parent Class Assembly — 2.30pm
Saturday 22 March	WASMA
Monday 24 March— Friday 4 April	Big Walk and Wheel
Wednesday 26 March	Year 3R— Parent Class Assembly —2.30pm
Thursday 27 March	Year 1G — Parent Class Assembly — 2.30pm
Thursday 27 March	Year 1 Phonics Screener Parent Information Meeting — 3.30pm-4pm
Thursday 27 March	Year 6 SATs Parent Information Meeting — 3.30pm—4.30pm
Friday 28 March	Coffee Morning—All welcome — 8.45am—10am
Friday 28 March	Year 3IH — Parent Class Assembly —2.30pm
<b>Friday 4 April</b>	<b>Last day of spring term - school finishes 1:30pm</b>
<b>Monday 7 April—Monday 21 April</b>	<b>Easter Holidays</b>
Tuesday 22 April	School starts for all children — Start of Summer Term