



# Newsletter

## Highwood Primary School Issue no 72

October 2025

'Where Individuals Matter'

Dear Parents/Carers,

### Welcoming Prospective Parents

Over the past few weeks, we've had the pleasure of welcoming many prospective parents and children to our school for tours. It has been a real privilege to show them around and to share the wonderful learning, enthusiasm, and sense of community that make our school such a special place. The feedback from visitors has been overwhelmingly positive, with many commenting on the calm, purposeful atmosphere and the friendliness of our pupils and staff. While families are still in the process of making their decisions, it has been lovely to see how impressed they have been by what they've seen here at Highwood.

If you have friends or family looking for a school place in September 2026, please do let them know that additional tour dates are available - we would be delighted to welcome them too.

**Highwood Primary School and Nursery**  
Fairwater Drive, Woodley, RG5 3JE

**Additional dates for tours!**

**OPEN MORNINGS AND PARENT TOURS**

Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 9.30am, 1.30pm and 6.00pm

If you are unable to make these dates, please call the school to discuss alternative options.

For September 2026 starters. Limited spaces available in other year groups

To book your place please call the school office on 0118 926 5493 or email [admin@highwood.wokingham.sch.uk](mailto:admin@highwood.wokingham.sch.uk)

**Our Learning Behaviours and Highwood Values**

- Reflection
- Teamwork
- Curiosity
- Creativity
- Perseverance
- Independence

### Settling In Beautifully

It's hard to believe how quickly this first half term has flown by! I have been so impressed with how well the children have adapted to their new year groups and routines. Whether moving up within the school or joining us for the first time, they have embraced new challenges with enthusiasm and confidence. It has been a real pleasure to see them settling so positively into their learning, forming new friendships, and showing such maturity in the way they have handled the transition.

### Our New Head Student Team

We are also delighted to announce the appointment of our new Head Student Team. The process attracted 21 thoughtful and enthusiastic applications, and we are so proud of every child who put themselves forward. The pupils made mature and considered choices in selecting their representatives, and we're confident that the new team will do a brilliant job in their roles. Congratulations!

Thank you for your support  
Matt Hickey  
Headteacher



All of us at here at Highwood could not be prouder of our wonderful pupil, Theo, whose courage, positivity, and strength inspire everyone who knows him. Every single day, Theo reminds us what it truly means to be brave. Despite facing more challenges in his young life than most adults will ever experience, he approaches each one with a smile and an unshakable spirit. He is, without question, a shining example of perseverance and hope for our whole school community.

Theo's many medical conditions have meant he has spent long periods in hospital throughout his short life. In one year alone, an incredible 22 separate visits. Yet, through it all, he continues to radiate joy and determination.

His nominator for the Child of Courage Award said:

"Theo is my absolute hero, and he and his family are the bravest people I have ever met. They never complain or moan about their situation; they always find the positives despite all of the challenges."

And for this little boy, there have indeed been many challenges.

Theo was born with a rare bone marrow failure syndrome, a condition characterised by congenital abnormalities and an increased risk of certain cancers. He underwent his first surgery at just one day old, when doctors placed a tube to deliver nutrition directly to his stomach, alongside another tube to constantly remove saliva from his mouth.

At two months old, surgeons attempted another repair, but with little success.

In June 2021, Theo faced a frightening setback when he developed sepsis following an infection in his only kidney. "Thankfully, after a week of IV antibiotics, he was back to himself," said his nominator.

After two cancelled appointments due to Covid, Theo underwent yet another major surgery, this time pulling his stomach up into his chest and connecting the two ends. He was sedated for two weeks to help him heal.

Even in what his family calls a "quiet" year, Theo has been under the care of numerous medical teams, including surgery, urology, haematology, genetic oncology, craniofacial, speech and language, audiology, and dietetics. Each challenge he faces, he meets with incredible courage and the gentlest of smiles.

The Child of Courage Award, sponsored by De Vere Wokefield Estate, recognises a young person (aged 16 or under) who has demonstrated outstanding bravery in the face of illness or other life-changing circumstances. Theo embodies everything this award stands for - courage, determination, and an unbreakable spirit.

We, his teachers, classmates, and the entire school, could not be more proud. Theo has taught us all the meaning of resilience, kindness, and hope. He is our hero and we are honoured to celebrate his extraordinary journey.



# Governing Body News

Dear Parents, Carers, Staff and Pupils,

## What do we do?

The Highwood Governing body is a dedicated group of volunteers (parents and co-opted members) who committed to making Highwood a great school for pupils, staff, parents & carers, staff and the local community.



As part of our role, we keep a close eye on what's happening in education nationally and how it affects our school community. Here's a short update on some key issues across the country — and how we're working with school leaders to make sure Highwood stays strong, supportive, and forward-looking.

## School Funding & Pupil Numbers



We're checking how changing pupil numbers might affect funding and considering additional income streams, alongside reviewing the school's 3-year budget plan and ensure we use funds to protect learning.

## National Education Reforms



The government is introducing major reforms through a new *Schools Bill* — including changes to how schools are supported and inspected. Ofsted will move away from single-word grades towards more detailed feedback, and the school leadership & governing team will ensure any changes continue to put children's learning and wellbeing first.

## Inclusion & SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)

Nationally, SEND reforms are still being rolled out, and schools are waiting for clearer guidance. There's widespread concern about how to meet every child's needs with limited specialist support available. Our SEND Link Governor meets regularly with staff to monitor provision and training. We review data and parent feedback to ensure pupils with additional needs are fully supported.

## Governor Vacancies

We are in the middle of our parent governor election, so we will be able to announce the new joiners to the team in November.

## Listening to You

Governors represent the whole school community — parents, carers, staff and pupils. We're always keen to hear your views and ideas.

If you'd like to know more about what governors do, have questions about school priorities, or would consider getting involved in the future, please visit the Governors section of the website (currently being updated), but feel free to visit and find out more information.

Enjoy the half term break!

Highwood Governors



# Foundation 1 News

Mrs Alleyne

Mrs Cooper, Mrs Bailey

Welcome to our first F1 News this year. We have had a very busy start to the Autumn Term in F1. All the children have settled incredibly well and have begun making friends. We have been exploring our termly topic **'What makes us special?'** which has allowed us all to get to know each other and explore ourselves as individuals.



We started off this half term learning about each other and discovering how we are all different and unique. The children designed their own self-portraits on paper and were very creative, representing their designs on biscuits. We spoke about different characteristics and what makes us similar and different.



We have started to explore our senses beginning with touch, taste and sight. We used our senses and explored our outside areas to find pine cones, conkers and acorns. We've begun learning about our sense of taste by trying a variety of foods, some of which were sour, sweet, salty, creamy and bitter and spoke about how we would describe the flavours.

We continued our topic and strengthened our fine motor skills by chopping vegetables to make our own healthy Autumn soup.



Our first SPLAT of the year was successful and the children enjoyed having their families in school. Thank you to all that came.

We finished our term learning about Diwali, the festival of lights. Making rangoli patterns, decorating the class, tasting some sweet treats and making diya lamps from clay.



Throughout this half of term all the children having been trying very hard to develop their independence and do things for themselves. This includes taking care of themselves, their belongings and their environment.

We are proud of how kind and supportive the children are to each other at such a young age.

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

**Have a look on Seesaw to see what we are up to each week!**



# Foundation 2 News

Mrs Parker and Miss Grainger

Miss Webb, Mrs Poulton, Mrs Newham, Mrs Vanka

Welcome to our first F2 Newsletter! We have had a very busy and successful first half of the term, ensuring that all our children settle into their new classrooms. We are pleased to say that they have settled amazingly well and we are very proud of them.



Our Topic this term is **Could Dinosaurs Live in Woodley?** We were all excited to go outside and discover some large claw marks in the outside area. The children came up with lots of theories, including that a giant T-rex had visited!

We received a very interesting letter from the institute of dinosaurs who gave us a dinosaur egg to care for. This sparked huge interest among the children which prompted them to make nests and search for food for the new born dinosaur.



The children thoroughly enjoy our phonics sessions using our scheme: Little Wandle letters and sounds. They have been very creative, practising their letters in sand, salt, with chalk and even with tooth brushes! Thank you for continuing to read at home with them to promote this learning.



In Maths we have been learning to match, sort and compare different objects. We enjoyed exploring different sorting techniques and creating our own sorting rules. We have also been exploring patterns, recognising them in the environment and making our own.



We were also lucky enough to receive two special visits. One from Louis Taylor, who taught us about road safety. We learnt how to safely cross the road, by holding hands, stopping, looking both ways and listening.



Our other visit was from Sarah who shared tips on how to be resilient. We learnt that we might not be able to do something YET, but if we keep on trying we will be able to one day. Both workshops were great fun and very informative.

This term the children begun their PE sessions with Mr Edwards. They have been perfecting gymnastic skills.

Now that the weather is getting colder, please ensure your child has a **black tracksuit top, trousers and trainers** in their PE kit. Thank you.



Thank you to all the parents that have supported us and we look forward to another busy but enjoyable half-term in Foundation 2!



# Year 1 News

Miss Bolger, Mrs Ahmed and Mrs Garner

Miss Mubashar, Mrs Wheeler, Mrs Rodroju, Mrs Aswal, Mrs Kaur

What a fantastic start to Year 1 we have had. We have seen the children grow so much in confidence and independence over the past few weeks and they have settled into the new routines of Year 1 really well.

## Where In The World Am I?

### Science

As part of our Key Question, in Science, we have been finding out about the body. We can name different parts of the body and some organs.

We have done lots of activities to explore using our senses like a sound walk and trying to work out the flavour of crisps without tasting them!

We have also been learning about nocturnal and diurnal animals and why they might sleep at night. We focused on the animals that the children might see in Woodley.



### RE

We have been learning about the Christian story of Creation and thinking about why God wants Christians to look after our world. We also celebrated our own creativity.

### Art

We have been learning about the art of Henri Matisse and have been practicing techniques with paper such as folding, tearing and scrunching to create a collage.



### Maths

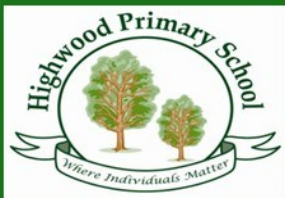
In Maths we have been busy working on our place value of numbers and representing them in different ways. We have done lots of practical activities when ordering numbers too. We have been practicing making and using part-whole models too.



### English

This term our focus has been on Julia Donaldson. We have read many stories which she has written, like The Tiddler and The Highway Rat. We loved reading the stories and have been writing sentences to describe the characters. We have even been writing lists of what we need to throw a party for the different characters. We have been so impressed with the children's phonics knowledge which they have used to write, and their superb describing words! There has been a lot of creativity demonstrated in year 1, where we have been making story sets to use to retell the story.





# Year 2 News

Miss Anderson, Miss Rumbold

Mrs Hillier, Miss Mair, Mrs Yu

**Wow! We have made a fantastic start to Year 2!**

**The children have loved learning about The Great Fire of London and are still keen for more.**

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



### Topic

This term, we've thoroughly enjoyed learning about the Great Fire of London. Our lessons have taken us back to 1666, where we learnt about Samuel Pepys and his famous diary. We discussed why his account is so significant and imagined what we might have written in our own diaries — even thinking about what we would have buried to preserve our memories! We also explored how the fire service has evolved since then, comparing fire-fighting methods from the past to those used today.



### PSHE

#### ***Learning to Stay Safe and Work Together***

This half term, we've been developing important life skills through our PSHE lessons. We've learned how to work together as a team and explored strategies for managing impulsive behaviour. We've also talked about how to ask for help and identified special people in our school and community who help keep us safe. A key focus has been online safety. We've discussed the benefits and risks of using the internet and learned how to stay safe online. We now understand the dangers of talking to strangers online and know that we should never share personal information.

### Science

In Science we have looked at everyday materials. We can now sort objects by materials and are able to identify their properties.

### Maths

This half term, we've been strengthening our understanding of place value and sharpening our mental maths skills.

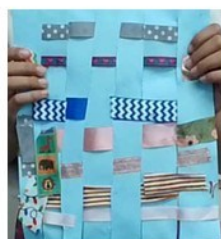
We've had lots of fun learning our 2 times table and chanting in steps of 2 to build fluency. A big focus has been on partitioning numbers into tens and ones for example, recognising that 34 can be split into 30 + 4 or even 20 + 14.



### Art

We've had such a great time weaving in our art lessons this term! Inspired by the amazing artist Gunta Stölzl, we started by sketching out our own designs and then got creative with paper and ribbon to bring them to life.

We explored different weaving techniques and tested out which materials worked best. It was so much fun learning something new, and we're really proud of the colourful and unique pieces we made.





# Year 3 News

Mrs Inwards, Mrs Hartgrove and Mrs Farooq

Mrs Kamath, Mrs Swamiraj, Mrs Yu

## *How could I survive in Pre-Historic times?*

### Reading and Writing

We have been reading a variety of texts linked to Pre-historic times. The children have really enjoyed reading Stone age boy, the First Drawing and we have just started reading The Boy with the Bronze Axe. In English, we have been focusing on grammar and punctuation. We have been learning all about nouns, verbs and the subject. The children have been focusing on how to correctly form a sentence.



### Topic

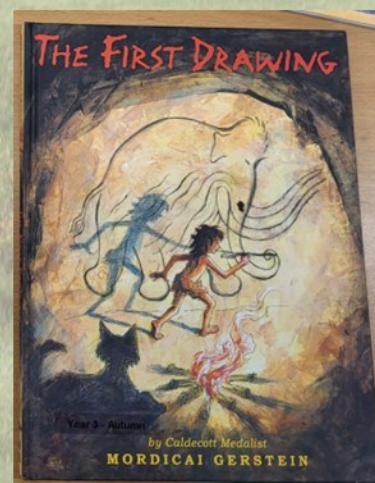
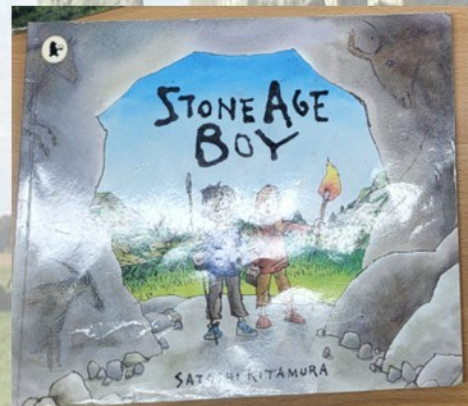
So, how could we survive in pre-historic times? We have begun to answer this question by looking individually at the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age and identifying the changes that have happened between these times. The children have also started to look at prehistoric settlements in Britain and had a go at predicting what these places could have been. We discovered a Hillfort and a Neolithic village. In Art we've been looking at cave paintings and experimenting with charcoal and sketching pencils.

### Maths

We have really focused on place value this term and are confident working with 3-digit numbers. We've started looking at adding and subtracting and in mental maths have had a real focus on our 2,5, 10 and 3 times table.

### Science

Our science has also linked with our big question and the Stone Age. We can now sort rocks and soils into groups based on their properties and have tested their strength using different experiments. We've also learnt about how fossils are formed.





# Year 4 News

Mrs Partridge, Mrs Downes

Mrs Nice, Mrs Mohammad, Mrs Strong

Welcome to the first edition of the Year 4 news! We are working hard, especially on our understanding of grammar and times tables, with lots of exciting opportunities and new learning going on. Please read on to find out more!

## What is More Essential: Water or Gold?



Year 4 have been busy investigating the Ancient Egyptians and how their wealth and the River Nile were important to their success.

We have learned all about the Ancient Egyptian Gods and why they were important. Year 4 even had a go at creating their own Ancient Egyptian god and writing their name in hieroglyphics!



## Maths

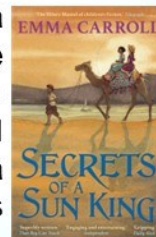
In maths this term we have explored and concreted our understanding of numbers and place value. We have been using our place value skills to partition numbers in standard and non-standard ways. We also learned how to round numbers to the nearest 10, 100 and 1000. More recently we have begun to use the written column addition and subtraction method to help solve tricky problems.

Our times table knowledge is coming along well, but any extra practise that could be done at home would really benefit your children.

## English

In our English lessons we have started the 'Place Value of Punctuation and Grammar' where we are learning lots about word classes and how to construct a grammatically correct sentence. We have used our perseverance to understand four different types of noun, the difference between an action and being verb, and even know what the subject of a sentence is! Why not ask us at home to give an example?

Year 4 have been reading 'Secrets of a Sun King' and the classes seem to be thoroughly enjoying it. We have been exploring exciting new vocabulary and using our skills of retrieval to answer a variety of questions. Our fluency has improved enormously as we have practiced our reading out loud skills.



## Science

In Science, we have been looking at states of matter, with a really exciting experiment where we investigated melting points. We loved seeing how much time it took to melt chocolate, butter and ice and particularly enjoyed 'sampling' a small amount of the chocolate just to check it would melt properly! Playing Solids, Liquids, Gases was a real highlight for many people in 4P!



## Geography

In Geography we have explored the River Nile and its importance to the Ancient Egyptians. We then learnt the features of a river and how it travels from the source into the mouth of seas and lakes. More recently we have deepened our understanding of weather and climate and understood how the Egyptians overcame the challenges of living in an arid climate!



We hope you all have a fantastic half term break!

*The year 4 team*



# Year 5 News

Mr Williams, Mr Robinson

Miss Briggs, Mr Edwards, Mrs Strong

## Has our planet finished evolving?

Welcome to the first edition of the Year 5 news! I am pleased to say that we've had a fantastic start to the school year, with lots of exciting opportunities and lots of new learning going on. Please read on to find out more!

### English

We have had a different start to our English lessons in Year 5. We have been exploring nouns, verbs and subjects and looked in great detail at how to structure a sentence before progressing onto including conjunctions to create multi-clause sentences. Our first unit of writing has been a non-chronological report.

We have explored some fictional planets (Luminara) and have created our own!

Once we have finished designing and writing our fictional planet, we will type them into ChatGPT to create an image—below is Mr Williams' example.



### Maths

This half term we have focused on place value of numbers up to a million, as well as decimals. Through this journey we have looked at place values of digits, rounding and counting in powers of 10, before finally moving onto addition and subtraction at the end of the half-term. We've also done lots of problem solving and reasoning around the unit too.

### Science

Our Science topic this term has been all about properties of materials. To begin with, we learnt the scientific language to group different materials and then did a series of experiments, including how to separate materials and looking at what might be soluble or insoluble! The children have some great ideas for some experiments that could be done at home!

### Key Question lessons

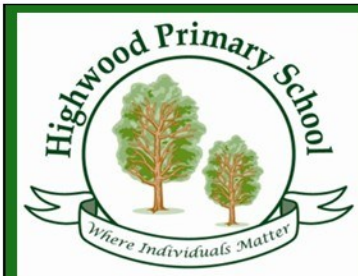
Finally, all our topic lessons this term have been around our key question:

### ***"Has our Earth finished evolving?"***

Highlights have included: learning about tectonic plates, using biscuits to see how tectonic plates work and how they can form mountains and volcanoes!



***It has been a super start to the year. We look forward to continuing this hard work after half term***



# Year 6 News

Miss Bicheno, Mrs Hind

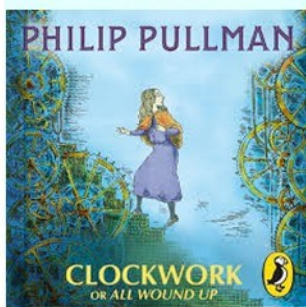
Mrs Lakshman, Mrs Panahpoori, Mrs Swamiraj

Welcome to the first newsletter for Year 6. Although we have only been back in school a matter of weeks, we have already achieved a lot. Our topic this term is, '**Does Change Always Lead to Progress?**', and we have been thinking about this through English, History and Geography.

## English

In whole class reading, we have thoroughly enjoyed our reading book 'Clockwork' by Philip Pullman. It is an exciting gothic story that has left many of the children on the edge of their seats with the many twists and turns throughout.

We have also read a non-chronological report about characters in gothic literature which the children found very interesting.



In Writing, we have gone back to basics and have been learning what an independent clause the highlight of these lessons is the children chanting the reason for why we need a full stop! We have also revised co-ordinating conjunctions, looked at compound subjects, dummy subjects and gerunds (exciting stuff!). The children have worked so hard with this and have all become independent clause superstars! We are looking forward to seeing how this helps with their first piece of independent writing after half term.

Because it's a **full independent clause** with a **subject** and a **verb**, so I place a **full stop** at the end and then go back and add a **capital letter**.

## Maths

So far in maths, we have been securing our understanding of place value. We have been learning how to read, write and compare large numbers (up to 10,000,000). We have been investigating negative numbers and rounding. Then we moved on to understanding the core skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

## Science

In Science, we have been learning how animals can be classified. We have looked at vertebrates and invertebrates, we have learnt what a classification key is and how to use one. The highlight of science this half term has to be the yeast experiment which blew the children's minds that yeast can give off enough carbon dioxide to blow up a balloon!

## History

We have been studying the Industrial Revolution and the changes that occurred between 1750 and 1900. So far we have concentrated on looking at population growth, urbanisation and technological changes. We have found out about the lives of children and the jobs that they were sometimes asked to do.

## PE

In PE we have been improving our understanding of SEND sports, alongside learning the basics of tag rugby and creating our own tag rugby games to teach the rest of the class (when it hasn't been raining)!

## Swimming

This term 6B have been swimming at Blue Coats Secondary School where they have been learning water confidence and how to swim using the correct techniques. Whatever their ability, the progress over a short period of time has been great to see. 6H are just beginning their chance to improve and impress with their swimming skills.

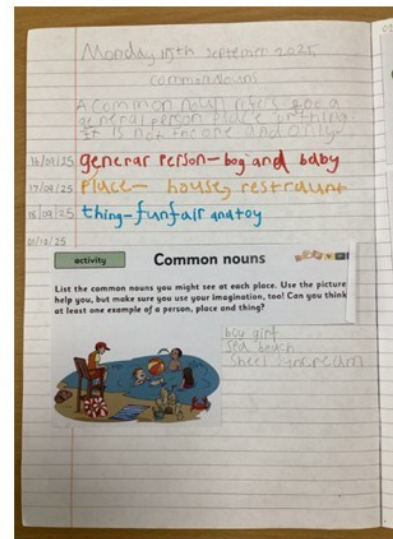


# The Grove Speech and Language Resource News

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

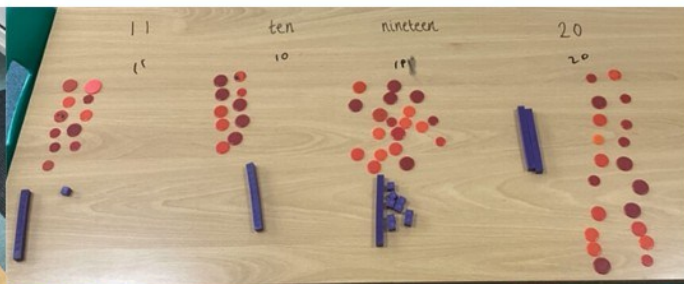
## Literacy: Fine Motor, Handwriting and Common Nouns

This Autumn half term has been jam-packed with different focusses across the resource, We have had hot air balloons made in a fine motor group, exploring how to form letters (with beautiful handwriting being produced) along with finding words beginning with the same letter, and introduction of our new English scheme with the focus on common nouns.



## Maths: Fine Motor, Numbers and Place Value

In maths, each child has had their own individualised tasks with some children using task plans and all children being independent with their learning. This has ranged from fine motor maths skills, 1:1 counting, number bonds, Flash Back 4s and learning about place value.





# PE/Sports News

Mr Edwards

**Welcome** to the first half term "PE & Sports News Page" of academic Year 2025/26.

## PE Lessons:

This half term the children have been learning skills such as "control, pass & receive, target, catching, throwing, reaction, speed & agility. This has all been carried out utilising many different types of balls. There has been some fantastic results with children improving their basic skills. The KS2 children have had both "Invasion games" and Disability games. KS1 have had an amazing time working on their ball skills and Dance whilst taking on the roles of Prehistoric animals, fire, rats and the fire-fighters linking in their Autumn topics.

Swimming lessons have resumed this half term with 6B. They have been making so much progress, especially our beginner or non swimmers. In only a few weeks, some have progressed from walking across the pool to swimming 25m unaided! This shows great confidence in themselves and their ability. Our strong swimmers that have passed level 6 last year had an extra special challenge! This was to choreograph a synchronised swimming routine using as many of the skills learned between level 1-6. Each year 6 class is getting 6 weeks of lessons before the Christmas holidays. I would like to encourage our parents to take their children swimming. It is great fun for all of the family plus aiding with our overall health and fitness.

## After School Clubs:

### Tuesdays:

Year 4/5/6 Girls & Boys Tag Rugby

### Wednesdays:

Year 2 Multisports

### Thursdays:

Yr 5/6 Boys & Girls Football

KS2 Dance

KS2 Choir

## Autumn Half Term Matches &

### Tournaments:

This half term we have invited schools to come to Highwood to play both boys and girls football teams in friendly matches. First up was Oaklands Boys which was a very tight game but finished 0-3 to the visitors. Next up was Finchampstead Boys where our team found their feet and each other rather than dribbling the ball too far! This time we won 2-0 showing great progress. The following week we had St Pauls visit us with both Boys & Girls team. The boys again played really well dominating the first half but between the goal-keeper, upright and crossbar, we couldn't find the net until the last kick of the game running out 1-3 to St Pauls at full time. The girls first game was very exciting with many playing in a team for the first time. With a couple of experienced players in the team they ran out 7-0 winners which is an amazing result. In the last game of the half term, we had Polehampton boys team visit us. In a tough match against a well organised, "pass & move team" Highwood worked hard to forge an opening taking the lead early on. Polehampton fought back and eventually won the game 3-5.





# PE/Sports News

Mr Edwards

## Next Half Term PE Lessons:-

F2 " Ball Skills

Year 1 "Sending & Receiving"  
"Invasion-Basketball"

Year 2 "Invasion-Hockey"  
"Ball Skills"

Year 3 "Invasion-Netball & Football"

Year 4 "Invasion-Hockey & Tag Rugby"

Year 5 "Invasion-Netball & Hockey"

Year 6 Group Activity/Games/Teamwork  
"Gymnastics & Handball"

## PE Kit required:-Winter Gear.

Shorts, Highwood PE T-Shirt, Black Plain Tracksuit, Sturdy Trainers **not** Plimsolls.

## No Earrings!

**Please ensure your child has plain track-suits, both long trousers and long sleeved top as it is too cold for them this time of year to be dressed in shorts and t-shirt! Unless it is heavy rain or deep snow they will still do PE outdoors. Too many children are expecting to do PE without long sleeves and trousers.**

## House Captains.

I was really pleased to see that over half of the year 6 cohort had put themselves forward as candidates for the role of house captain. We heard some great speeches where the children were able to put into practice their skills of speaking in front of a crowd overcoming fears and improving confidence. After the speeches the children voted for who they would like to see as a captain. We have again chosen both captains and vice captains as this is a major role within Highwood Primary .

Congratulations to the following children.

## Red Kites:

Captain: Hanna Wojtak

Vice Captain: Samuel Lovejoy

## Falcons:

Captain: Rowan Pash

Vice Captain:Sreesha Sanjay Sri Parishad

## Eagles:

Captain: Nishka Bhandary

Vice Captain: Jaiden Patel

## Hawks:

Captain: Joseph Hammond

Vice Captain: Deetya Kaveri

## Achievements outside of school:

Please feel free to send in pictures of your children enjoying taking part in activities outside of school or achievements in their clubs in their own time.

## Mr Edwards Message For The Half Term.

It seems from chatting to many children this term that there is an increase in the amount of children taking part in activities and clubs out of school. This is so pleasing. Please feel free to contact me with fixtures as I love to come and watch the children play their matches. Already this year I have attended Woodley Saints Football Team games and would like to see more children playing the sports they love.

It just remains for me to wish you all a great half term break. Stay safe but stay active!

Mr Edwards



# 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 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 first half of the Autumn term in the family centre. I wanted to take a moment to connect with you all to share some updates, support resources, and reminders. It's been a pleasure seeing so many of you at school events, drop-ins and workshops - thank you for your continued involvement in school life.**

## **What's been happening this half term:**

- **Coffee and chat mornings:** Thank you to everyone who has attended. These informal sessions are a great opportunity to meet other parents, share ideas and have a drink and a chat! All dates are advertised in the weekly bulletin.
- **Attendance Matters:** We've been working closely with families to improve punctuality and attendance and work through barriers and challenges. Every school day counts. Thank for you supporting your children to be in school and ready to learn.
- **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. This half term we worked with SEND Voices to host a parent forum for the PINS project which looks at inclusivity across the school.
- **Little Saplings Family Playgroup:** welcoming families with young children who will join Highwood in sessions of play, learning, singing and creating. All dates are advertised in the weekly bulletin.
- **Young Carers Support Group:** we continued our group with Natasha, the schools lead from Berkshire Youth/Wokingham Young Carers. If your child has any caring responsibilities at home and they are over 8 yrs. they are welcome to join us next term. Please contact me for more information.
- **Parent Gym sessions:** with our wonderful new cohort of Parent Gym parents at Highwood We are looking forward to our next three sessions.
- **Winter warmers** - we are still running a 'bring a coat, leave a coat' rail. If you are in need of a coat for your child, you will can choose one, at no cost. If your child has outgrown one, you can leave their old one on the rail to find a new owner.
- **And lots of** individual meetings with parents and carers, brain storming and trouble shooting issues of concern for them and their children.

**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)**





# SENCO

Dear Families,

As we head into the October half term, it's a lovely chance for everyone to pause, rest, and recharge after a busy start to the school year. Some children will enjoy the change of routine, while others may find the lack of structure a bit tricky.

A few gentle ideas that might help:

- Keep a bit of routine where you can — familiar mealtimes or bedtime can make a big difference.
- Build in some quiet time each day for rest or calm play.
- Plan simple activities together, like a walk, baking, or a board game — time spent together is what matters most.
- If your child benefits from visuals or structure, a simple daily timetable can help them feel secure.

A big thank you to everyone who attended our second PINS coffee morning run by Send Voices Wokingham. We will be continuing to work on this project throughout the academic year.

We're very lucky to have fantastic local SEND support services that offer lots of helpful courses and events for families. We share details of these in our weekly bulletin, and you can also find more information on their websites (links below).

Whatever you're doing, we hope you enjoy a restful and happy half term — and we look forward to seeing everyone refreshed and ready for more learning after the break!

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 SEND concerns, please initially talk to your child's class teacher.

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

## **Holiday Support and activities**

[Holiday, Activities, and Food programme \(wokingham.gov.uk\)](https://www.wokingham.gov.uk)

[Places to Walk Archives - Berkshire Mummies](#)

[Home | Camp Mohawk](#) a multi-functional day centre for children with special needs and their families.

## **Supporting SEND**

[Seven techniques for helping kids keep calm - CBeebies - BBC](#)

[Events | SEND Voices Wokingham](#)



## **Speech and Language support**

[Home - Afasic](#)

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

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

F1 SALT: [Communication and hearing | Children Young People and Families Online Resource](#)

## **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 \(the vestibular system\)](#)

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





# SENCO

## **Local SEND Support**

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

[Homepage \(sendiasswokingham.org.uk\)](#) free, confidential, impartial advice, guidance and support

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

[Home Page - PSC \(parentingspecialchildren.co.uk\)](#)

[Events | SEND Voices Wokingham](#)

## **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 you offload, they don't have to provide advice unless you ask for it.

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

## **Mental Health**

[little-blue-book-of-sunshine.pdf](#) (berkshirehealthcare.nhs.uk)



## **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**

[Autism+Facts+for+Kids.pdf](#)

[Talking to your child about autism - CBeebies - BBC](#)

[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 \(Autism Spectrum Service for Information Support and Training\)](#)

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

## Half Term Holiday Activities:

[Woodley Town Council Events information](#)

[Half Term in Reading | What's On Reading](#)

[October Half Term and Halloween What's On Guide in Berkshire](#)



## Halloween Advice from the SENCO



Halloween can be lots of fun — dressing up, parties, and trick-or-treating! But for some children, especially those with additional needs, it can also bring a few challenges. Here are a few tips to help make it enjoyable for everyone:

↓↓↓↓ **Keep routines in mind** – Try to keep meal, bedtime, and quiet times as close to normal as possible.



**Talk it through** – Chat with your child about what to expect. Looking at photos or practising a “trick or treat” can help prepare them.



**Costume comfort** – Choose costumes that are comfy, not itchy or tight, and let your child try them on in advance.



**Noise and lights** – Some decorations or sounds can be overwhelming. It's okay to skip houses or events that feel too busy or loud.



**Alternative fun** – If trick-or-treating isn't right for your child, you could have a cosy movie night, bake some spooky treats, or do a small Halloween craft at home.

Whatever you choose to do, we hope you have a safe, happy, and fun-filled Halloween!

Links for additional Halloween advice:

[Inclusive Halloween Activities for Children with Special Educational Needs](#)

[Tips for an autism-friendly Halloween](#)

[10 Halloween Safety Tips for Children with Special Needs - Parenting Special Needs Magazine](#)



# Attendance Matters

It s been a busy half term for attendance. Thank you to all our parents/carers who have kept in touch with me about their child's 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



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



- 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 can expect you.
- 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. If your child needs non-prescribed medication during the school day such as calpol we are happy for you pop in.

**If you are finding it a challenge then please do come and talk to us**

Missing a lot of school because of ill health can have a big impact on your child's education. Of course there are many other reasons why a child may not want to be in school .Lucy Morris, our Family Support Worker and myself are always here to help by offering support and advice.



# Friends of Highwood

1st Woodley Scouts

# SCOUTS FIREWORKS DISPLAY

7th November

- Gates open at 6pm
- Fireworks 7.30pm

Rivermead Primary School Woodley

Advance booking ticket prices  
until 6 November

£22 Family ticket

£10 Adult    £6 Child

Prices will be higher on the gate

No toilets on site this year

Food, drinks, Glows and sweets available to purchase  
on the night.



Scan the QR  
code to buy  
tickets



NO SMOKING OR ALCOHOL  
PERMITTED ON SITE

# Friends of Highwood

YOU ARE INVITED TO

FRIENDS OF HIGHWOOD

## Winter Fayre

Saturday

29<sup>th</sup> November

2025

GAMES · RAFFLE · CRAFTS

AND MUCH MORE!

FROM  
12  
PM

FREE  
ENTRY

UNTIL  
3  
PM



# Reminders



## SCHOOL UNIFORM

School uniform can be purchased directly from our supplier Michael Hope through this [link](#).

Please note that free delivery to school is only available up to October Half Term. Otherwise there is a delivery charge of **£4.95** to home up until Easter.

## SCHOOL DINNERS

Children in Reception and Years 1 & 2 are entitled to universal free school meals, funded by the government. If you think your child is eligible for benefits related free school meals please contact the school office.

Children in Nursery, Years 3 to 6 are required to pay for dinners. The price of a school dinner is to **£2.57 per day**.

As you will know that we have moved to a new catering provider "Innovate" where you are required to book your child's dinner directly with the provider.

More information has been sent to you and available on our website.

**Please remember that we are a NUT-FREE school.**



## ABSENCE

Please contact the school office by **9am** 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 926 5493.

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.

Please see the latest Attendance Policy on the school website regarding Penalty Notices.

## EARRINGS

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

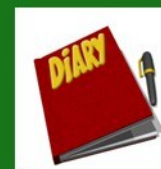
It is recommended that ear piercing is only done in the first week of the summer holidays to allow the time for them to settle.

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



**Only stud earrings are allowed in school.**

# Diary Dates



Please find a list of forthcoming dates

<b>Friday 24 October</b>	<b>Inset day - school closed for staff training</b>
<b>Monday 27 - Friday 31 October</b>	<b>Half Term</b>
<b>Monday 3 November</b>	<b>Inset day - school closed for staff training</b>
Tuesday 4 November	F2 SPLAT—1.30pm to 3pm
Wednesday 5 November	Year 5 SPLAT - 1.30pm to 3pm
Thursday 6 November	Year 2 SPLAT - 1.30pm to 3pm
Friday 7 November	Non-uniform day for “Elfridges” donations for Winter Fair
Monday 10 November	Odd Socks Day—to raise awareness for Anti Bullying Week
Monday 10 November	Year 6 SPLAT - 1.30pm to 3pm
Tuesday 11 November	Remembrance Day
Wednesday 12 November	School Photographer - Individual and Sibling photos
Thursday 13 November	Year 4 SPLAT 1.30pm to 3pm
Friday 14 November	Parent coffee morning in Family Centre - 8.45am to 9.45am
Friday 14 November	Children in Need Day (wear spots or merchandise) - Fundraiser
Tuesday 18 November	Prospective new parent tours - 9.30am, 1.30pm & 6pm
Thursday 20 November	Prospective new parent tours - 9.30am, 1.30pm & 6pm
Friday 28 November	SEN support coffee morning in Family Centre - 8.45am to 9.45am
Friday 28 November	Non-uniform day for chocolate and bottle donations for Winter Fair
Saturday 29 November	FOH Winter Fair
Wednesday 10 December	Christmas Lunch and Christmas Jumper Day -- Fundraiser
Friday 12 December	Parent coffee morning in Family Centre - 8.45am to 9.45am
Tuesday 16 December	F1 & F2 Nativity—9.30am -10am
Tuesday 16 December	Year 2 Nativity—10.15am -11am
Wednesday 17 December	F1 & F2 Nativity—1.45pm– 2.15pm
Wednesday 17 December	Year 2 Nativity—2.15pm—3pm
Thursday 18 December	F1 & F2 Nativity—9.30am -10am
Thursday 18 December	Year 2 Nativity—10.15am -11am
Thursday 18 December	Parent Book Look in classrooms - 3.15pm to 3.45pm
<b>Friday 19 December</b>	<b>Last day of term - school finishes at 1.30pm</b>
<b>Monday 22 December—Friday 2 January 2026</b>	<b>Christmas Holidays</b>
<b>Monday 5 January 2026</b>	<b>Inset Day - School closed for staff training</b>
Tuesday 6 January	School starts for all children
<b>Friday 13 February</b>	<b>Inset Day - School closed for staff training</b>
<b>Monday 16 — Friday 20 February</b>	<b>Half Term</b>
Monday 23 February	School starts for all children