



Newsletter

Highwood Primary School Issue no 73

December 2025

'Where Individuals Matter'

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we approach the end of the year, it feels like a natural moment to pause, reflect on the success of the previous calendar year and look ahead to what the new year will bring and looking in this term's newsletter, there is a lot to celebrate!

On a personal note, Thank you for the kind and thoughtful messages I've received following the recent structural change announcement - they have meant a great deal, and I want to express my thanks for everyone who took the time to email in or speak with me on the gate.

This week, myself and Mrs Welsh have reorganised my office (with the help of the site team), so that it is now her office with a space for me to work. This transition marks the (temporary) close of a very special phase for me at Highwood, but certainly not the end of my connection or commitment to our special community.



As you know, from January, my role will evolve and take a broader, more strategic shape. I won't be quite as present in the day-to-day life of the school as I have been for the last 11 years, and I know that may feel like a significant shift. Yet while my visibility may change, my dedication will absolutely not. I will still be working closely with Highwood, just more often behind the scenes, helping to guide and support the work that drives continued improvement and growth.

What reassures me most in this moment of change is the strength of the team who will be leading the school from the forefront. Mrs Welsh, supported by our leadership team, will provide the daily direction, presence and care that our children and families rely on. Their passion for Highwood shines through in everything they do, and I know the school will flourish under their guidance.

While my role will look different, the values, ethos and culture that define our school remain firmly at the heart of everything we do. I will continue to work closely with the leadership team to support and sustain the high standards, shared vision and positive environment that our children and families know so well.

As well as this change taking place in January, we have a few valued members of staff leaving us.

- Miss Grainger moves on to teach in an Early Years setting in another Wokingham school. I would like to thank her for the care, enthusiasm and learning experiences she has brought to many children across the school
- Mrs Partridge is leaving to take up a really exciting role within the NHS supporting children with their mental health. This an exciting next step, and one we wish her every success in.
- Mr E Edwards is starting a completely new career as an air traffic controller; we thank him for his commitment and wish him all the very best in this new and exciting challenge.
- And finally a special mention to Mrs Payne who has been part of our school community since 2009 and is now moving on to a different role away from supporting children in the classroom. Her 16 years of service, working in a range of roles, she has supported and positively influenced the learning journeys of thousands of children.

We wish them all well in the next stages of their working lives.

Joining us in January will be Miss Rees in F2, Mrs Buckley in Year 4 and Miss Finch in The Grove - I am sure you will all make them very welcomed.

Thank you for your support and have a wonderful festive break!

Matt Hickey
Headteacher





Governing Body News

Dear Parents and Carers,

Governor Update

We are delighted to welcome [Danny Hind](#) as our new parent governor, who joins us alongside 2 new staff governors: [Mrs Downes & Mrs Morris](#). They are committed to enhancing our school's community and supporting our mission. Welcome to the team!

We are currently [looking for new co-opted governors](#) to join our Local Governing Body. You don't need to be an education expert or live locally—just someone who is willing to contribute their time, perspective and common sense to help the school thrive. Being a governor is a rewarding way to support children, develop your own skills in leadership and strategic thinking, and make a real difference to the school community. If you're interested in getting involved or would like to know more, please complete this form: [Highwood Governors - Information Request](#).

New Leadership Structure

As we move into 2026, the Governing Body would like to reassure families that we fully support the new leadership structure and are confident it positions Highwood well for continued success. Mrs Welsh brings deep knowledge of our school and a strong commitment to our community, and we look forward to working closely with her as she takes on the Head of School role. Mr Hickey will continue to provide strategic oversight as Interim Executive Headteacher across both schools, ensuring consistency of vision and high standards. Our priority remains the children: their learning, wellbeing and enjoyment of school. We will continue to monitor the transition carefully and maintain clear communication with parents and staff throughout. Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

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

* Christmas Riddles *

1. I wear a red suit and travel in a sleigh — who am I?
2. I have antlers and pull the sleigh.
3. I'm soft and white, made of snow; roll me, stack me, give me a carrot nose.
4. I'm hung by the fireplace and filled with treats.
5. I twinkle on the top of the tree.
6. I ring at Christmas time and say "ta-da"

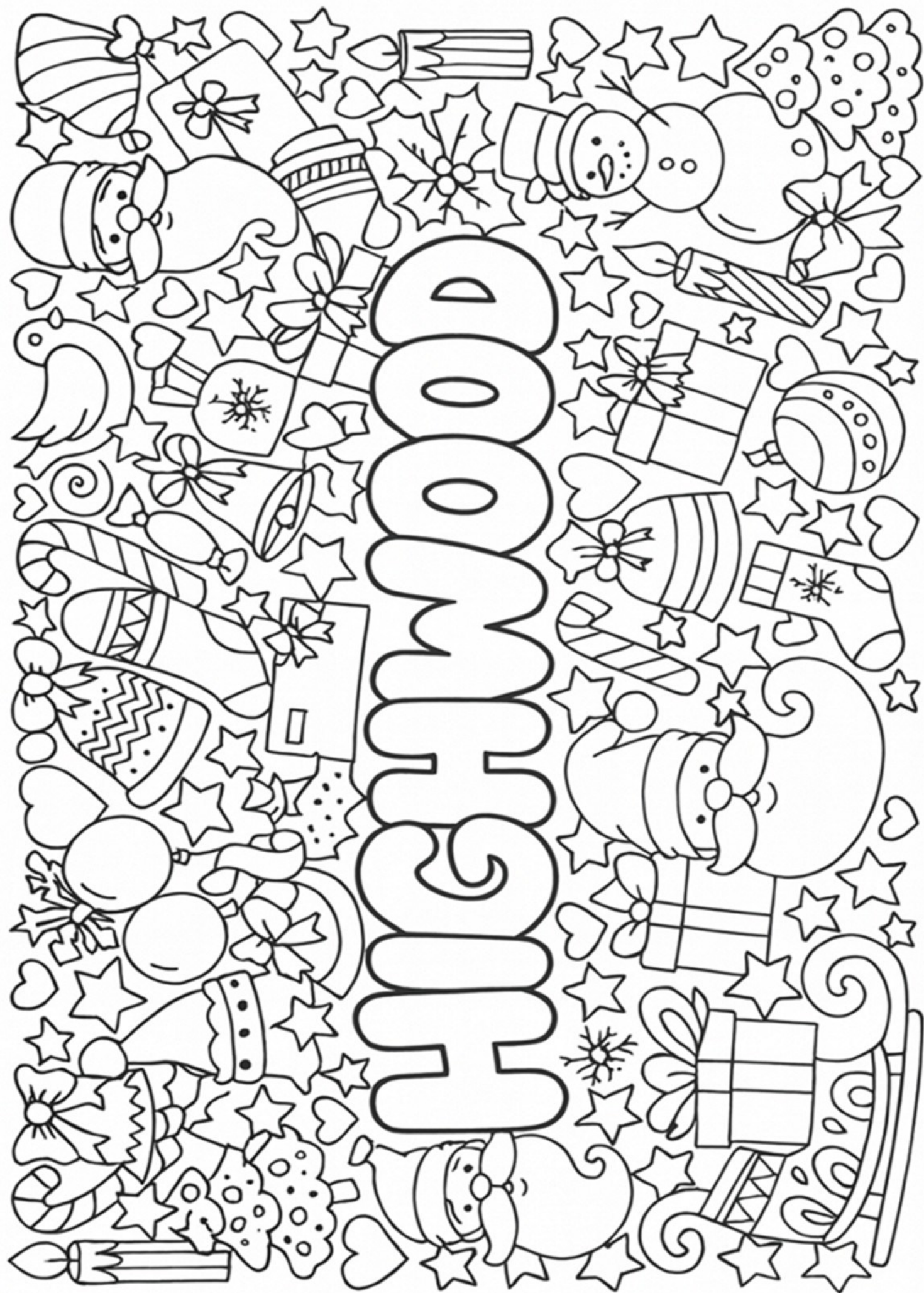
* Christmas Puzzles *

Four friends — Ali, Ben, Cara and Dan — each received a different Christmas gift (book, game, scarf, puzzle). Use the clues to find who got which gift.

Clues:

The person with the scarf is not Ali and not Dan.
Ben's gift is something you can open and play.
Cara does not like puzzles, so she didn't get the puzzle.
Ali loves reading.

Riddle Answers: 1) Santa. 2) Reindeer. 3) Snowman. 4) Stocking. 5) Star/angel. 6) Bells.
Gift Puzzle Answers: Ali – book; Ben – game; Cara – scarf; Dan – puzzle





Foundation 1 News

Mrs Alleyne

Mrs Cooper, Mrs Bailey

What makes us special?

Welcome to you all. What a fantastic end to the Autumn Term in F1. So many memorable and special experiences the children have had. We have explored our topic further **'What makes us special?'** which has allowed us to learn about our senses more in depth, look at people who help us and think about what we would like to be when we grow up.



At the beginning of this half term, the children explored their senses of smell and sight. The children used some fabulous vocabulary. "fruity, stinky, cheesy and mouldy. We did have some nice smells too.

Around firework night, the children were creative and made sparklers from bread sticks and we spoke about the safety



In the moment. The children were all very excited to see a beautiful rainbow in the sky so we took the opportunity to paint our own.



We welcomed Christmas into f1 and have enjoyed decorating our tree. We thank all the parents for helping to support the children with their songs for the Nativity. The children are very excited to show you all.



We have been understanding the world by finding out about different countries. The children used our interactive advent calendar to deliver parcels around the world. We have had our visits with our new families and look forward to them joining us in January.

Christmas jumper day and Christmas lunch was a success. We even had a visit from Santa.



Throughout this half of term all the children have been trying very hard to develop their mark making skills and have shown fantastic perseverance to write some letters in their names.



Thank you to all the parents that have supported us and we look forward to welcoming the children back after half term. We are looking forward to meeting our new starters and families.

Happy holidays!

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 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!

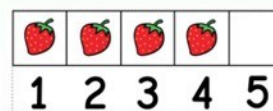


Topic

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!



And who can forget our Numberblock Day?! It was fantastic to see so many super representations of numbers! We had great fun looking at numbers, patterns and shapes, making our own Numberblocks with paints, playing with the Numberblock shape cars and having only maths lessons all day!



Phonics and Writing

We have had lots of other special days this term too, including Firework Night, Diwali, Remembrance and Children in Need. This has created lots of opportunities for strengthening our pencil grip and writing.



The Nativity

The children have been fabulous with practising the songs, actions and words for this year's nativity performances. We hope that you enjoy coming to see it as much as we enjoyed practising 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 and welcoming Miss Rees to Foundation Stage



Year 1 News

Miss Bolger, Mrs Ahmed and Mrs Garner

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

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

In English this term we have been learning about word types. We have learnt what a verb is and what a noun is, and how we need both of these to make a sentence. We have learnt to check that our sentence has a verb, a subject and any 'leftovers'.

History

In History we have been learning about the History of technology. We learnt about ways people used to write in the past such as using a typewriter. We compared it to modern ways of writing such as text messages and even voice-to-text apps. We also learnt about how people talked to people in the past and compared old phones with modern ones. We were surprised that you couldn't do video call on phones in the past or play games on them!



Maths



We have been learning about 3D shapes in maths. We have investigated which shapes are good for stacking and which are good for rolling. We have also talked about the properties of some of the shapes.



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.



DT

In DT this term, we have been making biscuits! We kneaded the dough and rolled it out, and used cutters in different shapes to make festive biscuits. We then decorated them and shared them with the residents at The Birches. We also enjoyed singing Christmas songs to them.



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. We have been showing creativity when drawing pictures.



Year 2 News

Miss Anderson, Miss Rumbold

Mrs Hillier, Miss Mair, Mrs Yu

We have been very busy this half term continuing to learn about The Great Fire of London and rehearsing 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?

English

We have been truly blown away by the standard of English work the children have produced this half term. They have been learning how to write non-chronological reports on minibeasts and have shown fantastic progress. The children created amazing sentences that included expanded noun phrases and coordinating conjunctions. They took great pride in polishing their reports, adding eye-catching backgrounds and images to make their work stand out.



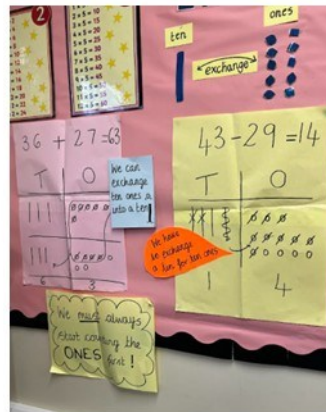
Nativity

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!



Design and Technology

This term the children designed and built their very own toy fire engine vehicles. They explored the mechanics of axles and wheels, discovering how these parts work together to make their models move. The children even had the chance to saw their wooden axles to size!

In a wonderful display of teamwork, they collaborated with Year 6 students to bring their moving toy fire engines to life.



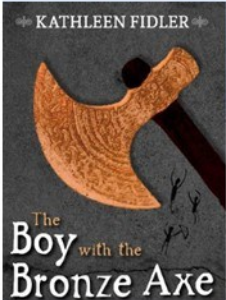


Year 3 News

Miss Hughes, Mrs Inwards, Mrs Hartgrove and Mrs Farooq

Mrs Kamath, Mrs Swamiraj, Mrs Yu

Could you survive in Pre-historic times?



Reading and Writing

We have been reading the *Boy with the Bronze Axe* which is based in Skara Brae and linked to our history topic.

In writing we have been trying to apply our newfound grammar knowledge to a non-chronological report and a character description both linked to our Prehistoric topic.

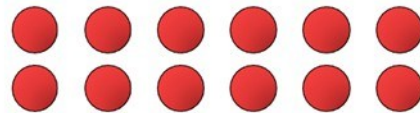


Topic

Could you survive in Prehistoric times? 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 français? 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.





Year 4 News

Mrs Partridge, Mrs Downes

Mrs Nice, Mrs Mohammad, Mrs Strong

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 SPLAT event and mummified tomatoes with us! 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 our own very unique fictional extinct animals and writing a non-chronological report about them. Our focus has been on using expanded noun phrases, coordinating conjunctions and apostrophe's for possession.

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 our inference skills to answer more probing comprehension questions.



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! Linking with our Ancient Egypt topic, we have also researched the Aswan Dam in Egypt and the positive and negative results on the local environment.



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!





Year 5 News

Mr Williams, Mr Robinson

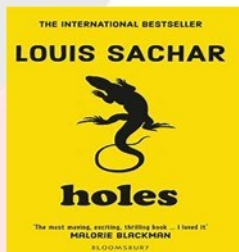
Miss Briggs, Mr Edwards, Mrs Strong

Has our planet 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 reading Holes by Louis Sachar. We read the book as part of our whole class reading lessons, and used sections of the book to write a narrative that included suspense!



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 - the children have worked so hard to master fractions!

Science and Key Question Lessons

The space-theme continues with our Key Question 'Has our planet 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 see who could build the best paper aeroplane! We then went outside and tested each one out (with varied success!) before evaluating the best designs.

Year 5 OLA Challenge

The Orchard Learning Alliance have launched an academy wide challenge for all year 5 and 6 children 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 in assembly.
- 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 the summer term 2026.

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



Year 6 News

Miss Bicheno, Mrs Hind

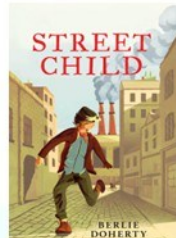
Mrs Lakshman, Mrs Panahpoori, Mrs Swamiraj

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 'Clockwork' by Philip Pullman and are now studying a fantastic book, 'Street Child', by Berlie Doherty. It is a story about how children used to live during the Industrial Revolution and follows the journey of Jim Jarvis. Children have enjoyed reading this and seeing how privileged they are today!

In our writing, we have used the story of 'Street Child' to inspire us and have written a diary recount of a day in the life of a street child. The children have used their knowledge of life in Victorian times and wonderful vocabulary to write wonderful diary entries.



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 evolution. The highlight was an experiment using different 'beaks' to see which was the best at picking up a range of different objects. The children could then see how important it is for species to evolve in order to survive.

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 sewing design inspired by his work.



PE

In PE, we have been focusing on invasion games, including handball and tag rugby. 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 Waingels Variety Show which has a huge hit with the children; to have had an RE workshop delivered by RE Inspired, creating wonderful Christmas decorations that have found a place in the classrooms; and to have had the opportunity to take part in

Bikeability. The Year 6 children have had a very busy and enjoyable term!

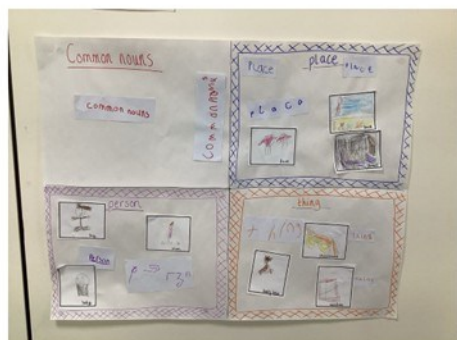
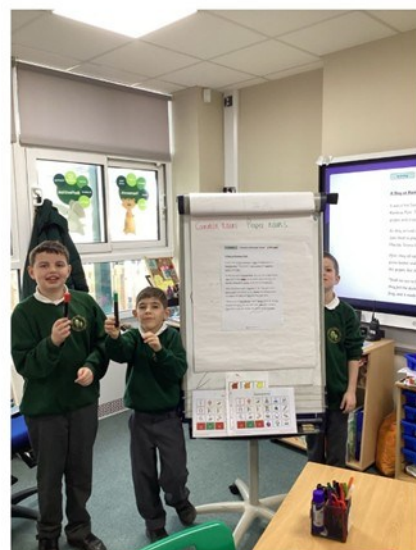


The Grove Speech and Language Resource News

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

Literacy: Stories, Nouns, Verbs and Creative Writing

This Autumn half term has been busy as ever with different focusses across the resource. We have been exploring Elmer the Elephant and retelling the story with puppets, learning what common nouns are and identifying them into general people, general things and general places, along with learning about proper nouns and investigating verbs. Some of our children have also been using AI to bring their descriptions to life. We have created monsters and their settings and we have now started describing our own dragon!



Maths: Fine Motor, Numbers and Place Value

In maths, each child has continued with their individualised learning. Some children have explored matching and key concepts of 'same' and 'different'. Others have continued their time tables and numbers bonds along with their Flash Back 4s. Everyone in The Grove has also all been mastering their place value skills.





PE/Sports News

Mr Edwards

Welcome to the final half term "PE & Sports News Page" of 2025. 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.



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

Year 6H have enjoyed a fabulous half term 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 Football, Tag Rugby & Year 2 Multisports giving the opportunity to as many children as possible. There will be new clubs in the spring term :

These will include, Netball, Paddles & Racquets & Year 1 Multisports.



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.

This half term we have been very fortunate to play a whole host of boys and girls friendly football matches. This has enabled us to give more boys and girls the opportunity to represent the school teams. I have been really impressed with how the teams have supported each other and welcomed new teammates.





PE/Sports News

Mr Edwards

Highwood Girls Football Team



Wokingham Schools Tag Rugby Event

2 rounds of tag rugby this term where 9 schools competed in a round robin of games, 10 minutes each game. They were Hawkedon, Highwood, Colleton, Loddon, Willowbank, Oaklands, Aldryngton, Finchampstead, & Hillside. All of the teams performed amazingly. They ran, passed & scored lots of Try's. In the first round we, like other schools were finding our feet, in round 2 we only lost one game drawing one and winning all of the other games. We clearly showed a huge improvement. 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:- 5R & 5W

Next Term Competitions:-

Tag Rugby league

Spring Term School Games including:-

Netball & Badminton

Handball & Basketball House Games.

Outside School Gallery

Congratulations to Ivy who has completed level 3 in Gymnastics. This is an amazing achievement!

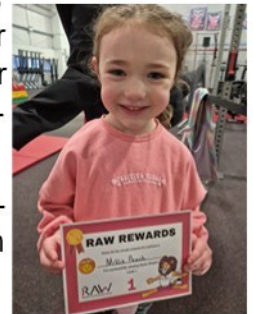


Congratulations to Daisy for completing her level 10 in Gymnastics.



Well done to Jake who has completed his 11th Parkrun and achieved half marathon wristband.

Congratulations to Millie for achieving her Level 1 in Gymnastics.



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!

Happy Christmas

Mr Edwards





Library News

Mrs Yule

I'd like to start with a big Thank you to all the children and parents who purchased books from the October Book Fair. We received over £1500 in sales of books and stationery. This gave us the maximum of 60% in rewards to spend on books. Along with a little of the money already in our Scholastic account, we chose books to the value of nearly £1000. This is a tremendous boost to our library stock.

I have chosen books suitable for Year 1 up to Year 6 and, with input from staff, have also chosen books that will help children to understand those with disabilities and others for whom the world can be different to navigate. I have added a few of the books I've purchased from other sources and two books about the human body that were purchased using the money received from the second -hand book sale at the Winter Fayre. The pictures of the books are all below.

Your support is very much appreciated. I will endeavour to get all the books into the library at the beginning of next term.

If you have any questions about the books that are available or would like some recommendations please email me – [jyule@highwood.wokingham.sch.uk](mailto: jyule@highwood.wokingham.sch.uk)

Wishing you all Seasons Greetings- enjoy the holidays

Mrs J Yule





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 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.
- **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 welcomed PINC and Camp Mohawk to talk to parents about what the charities do and can offer parents and families
- **Little Saplings Family Playgroup:** welcoming families with young children who will join Highwood in sessions of play, learning, singing and creating. We've made glittery Christmas tress, decorating biscuits, modelled with junk and enjoyed lots of bubbles! All dates are advertised in the weekly bulletin.
- **A Christmas jumper swap shop** to reduce waste, save money and save the planet!
- **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 (for example they have a sibling or a parent with a disability) and they are over 8 yrs. they are welcome to join us next term. Please contact me for more information.
- **Parent Gym Programme:** We had a really successful six-week Parent Gym course, supporting parents to develop positive strategies for family life. One parent told us:
I felt confident that the tools given will help me and my family be the best we can be and am very glad I attended. Each topic was relevant and good way to learn how to parent without the judgement and have the support you need.
- **And lots of** individual meetings with parents and carers, brain storming and trouble shooting issues of concern for them and their children.

"Wishing everyone a joyful holiday season and a happy new year — however you celebrate, may it be filled with peace, kindness, and laughter!"

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





SENCO

Dear Families,

It has been lovely to see all our Foundation and Year 2 children enjoying their Nativity rehearsals and performances. Their excitement and effort have really shone through.

We also understand that, while Christmas can be a magical time for many children, it can feel overwhelming for others—especially when routines change or there are lots of new sensory experiences. To help all our pupils feel secure and settled, we've been putting additional support in place during these last few weeks of the Autumn term. This includes keeping to familiar routines as much as we can, using clear visual timetables, giving advance warning of changes, and sharing social stories to help children understand what to expect.

In the next few pages, you'll find some helpful links with advice for supporting children with SEND over the Christmas period. We hope these resources make the holidays a more enjoyable and manageable time for your family.

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

L Padbury

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.

Speech and Language support

[Home - Afasic](#)

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

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

[Parent Portal - Speech and Language Link](#)



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 \(sendiasswokingham.org.uk\)](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)

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

[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](#)

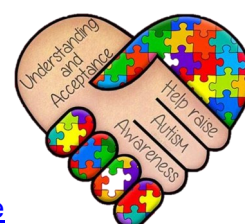
[Neurodiversity Hub - Resources for Students, Employers & More](#)

[Autism Berkshire Reading - Autism Berkshire](#)

[Neurodiversity News September 2023 \(newsweaver.com\)](http://newsweaver.com)

Fine Motor Skills

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





SENCO

SEND Days Out

[Building for the Future 'Our House'](#) Building for the Future is a Wokingham parent-led charity providing activities, support, and therapy for children with disabilities or additional needs and their families at Our House, a fully accessible play centre.

[Camp Mohawk](#) a multi-functional day centre for children with special needs and their families, set in 5 acres.

[Swings & Smiles](#) Swings & Smiles offers support for disabled children and their families in a unique and accessible environment. Our services include respite, family play sessions, youth clubs, sibling support and outreach.

[Thames Valley Adventure Playground](#) TVAP is a charity offering therapeutic, educational, and adventurous play for people of all ages with any disability, along with essential respite for families and carers.

[Thomley](#) is a place for people of all abilities and disabilities. They provide an exciting site for disabled people, their families, carers and friends. They support people at any stage of their diagnostic journey, whatever their additional needs.

[Yorda Adventures](#) They run a variety of play, care and family projects that support our young people and their families.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/290345366823924> A group for parents with children whom have additional needs, to help with finding activities in Berkshire and the surrounding areas.

Supporting SEND at Christmas



[Regulation strategies this festive season](#)

[Christmas Survival Guide \(snapcharity.org\)](#)

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

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

[Inclusive days out](#)



A Social Scenario: Staying home this festive season

Over the festive period, I won't be at school.



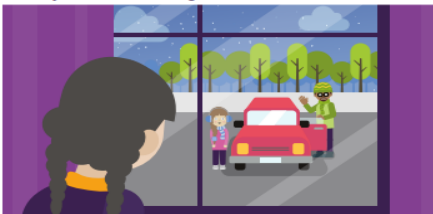
We will be spending more time at home.



Our house might be decorated with different lights and decorations.



Family and friends might visit us.



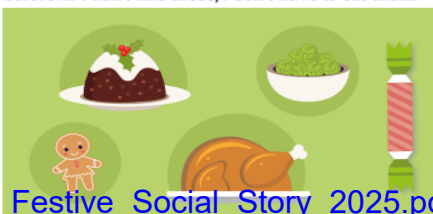
If it's too loud, I can use my headphones, or spend time alone in my bedroom.



I might receive gifts.



Sometimes, there will be new foods I haven't eaten before. If I don't like these, I don't have to eat them.



We might stay up later than our usual bedtime.



People might be wearing different types of clothes.





SENCO



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



Attendance Matters

It's been a long half term! I am so proud of all our children who have kept going and its lovely to see them smiling and waving at me every morning. Again, thank you to all our parents/carers who have kept in touch with me about their child's attendance. It has also been so nice to get to know our new parents.

Lucy and I have successfully supported many of our parents this term. We do understand that it is not always ill health that can have an impact on a child's attendance. If you are finding it a challenge please do always come and talk to us.

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. Alternatively give me a call or pop into reception for advice.



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

Highlights of Autumn term 2025!

- Persistent absence (under 90%) has considerably reduced. Thank you!
- 220 of our children have achieved excellent (97% and above) attendance this term
- Year 4 have achieved top attendance this term. A big well done!

We return to school on 6th January 2026 at 8.45am!

- ⇒ Gates open at 8.35am
- ⇒ The school day starts at 8.45am
- ⇒ School finishes at 3.15pm



The back-to-school transition—lets embrace the new year!

- Ease back into a school-based sleep schedule ahead of the first days back
- Reintroduce routine early
- Start to talk about school
- Reconnect with friends
- Engage your child's mind with brain boosting activities such as puzzles.

I will finish with wishing you all a healthy and happy Christmas break and lets hope we can continue our attendance successes in 2026!



Reminders



SCHOOL UNIFORM

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

Please note 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 is available on our website.

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

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

Monday 22 December - Friday 2 January	Christmas Holidays
Monday 5 January	Inset day - school closed to pupils
Monday 5 - Saturday 10 January	Year 6 Residential Trip
Friday 9 January	Coffee Morning - All welcome - 8.45am - 9.45am
Tuesday 13 January	Little Saplings Family Playgroup - 9am-10am
Friday 23 January	Year 4 Roman workshop
Friday 23 January	Dads/male carers coffee morning - 8.45am - 9.45am
Tuesday 27 January	Little Saplings Family Playgroup - 9am-10am
Friday 30 January	SEND support coffee morning with PINS - 8.45am - 9.45am
Friday 30 January	Year 3IH Class Assembly for parents - 2.30pm
Wednesday 4 February	Year 1 Trip to Milestones Museum
Friday 6 February	Coffee Morning - All welcome - 8.45am - 9.45am
Friday 6 February	Year 6H Class Assembly for parents - 2.30pm
Monday 9 February	F1 Story Session - 3.15pm-3.45pm
Tuesday 10 February	Little Saplings Family Playgroup - 9am-10am
Thursday 12 February	F2P Class Assembly for parents - 2.30pm
Thursday 12 February	Parent Book Look in classrooms - 3.15pm-3.45pm
Friday 13 February	Inset day - school closed to pupils
Monday 16 - Friday 20 February	Half Term - school closed
Monday 23 February	School Starts for all Children
Tuesday 24 February	Little Saplings Family Playgroup - 9am-10am
Thursday 26 February	Year F2G Class Assembly for parents - 2.30pm
Friday 27 February	Year 5R Class Assembly for parents - 2.30pm
Thursday 5 March	World Book Day 2026
Thursday 5 March	Year 1BA Class Assembly for parents - 2.30pm
Friday 6 March	Coffee Morning - All welcome - 8.45am - 9.45am
Friday 6 March	Year 6B Class Assembly for parents - 2.30pm
Friday 6 March	Reports out to parents (Years F2 to Year 6)
Tuesday 10 March	Year 1 Scooter Training
Tuesday 10 March	Little Saplings Family Playgroup - 9am-10am
Thursday 12 March	Year 1G Class Assembly for parents - 2.30pm
Friday 13 March	SEND support coffee morning - 8.45am - 9.45am
Friday 13 March	Year 3HF Class Assembly for parents - 2.30pm
Monday 16 - Friday 27 March	Big Walk and Wheel
Tuesday 17 March	Year 1 Phonics Screener parent information meeting - 3.30pm - 4pm
Thursday 19 March	Year 2A Class Assembly for parents - 2.30pm
Thursday 19 March	Year 6 SATs parent information meeting - 3.30pm - 4pm
Friday 20 March	Red Nose Day
Friday 20 March	Coffee Morning - All welcome - 8.45am - 9.45am
Friday 20 March	Year 4D Class Assembly for parents - 2.30pm
Thursday 26 March	Year 2R Class Assembly for parents - 2.30pm
Friday 27 March	Last day of spring term school finishes at 1.30pm
<i>Class Assemblies for 5W and 4P will be taking place in the Summer term</i>	