

Pace in school is so fast that its hard to accept that we have only been back in school for two weeks. The children and staff, back for the new year, have settled quickly into the routines. Speaking to some of the teachers we were reflecting on how the Spring term can be such a productive one, with expectations understood by the children and less of the extra activities of the Autumn and Summer terms it is a great opportunity for the children to make leaps and bounds with their learning.



It was fantastic to receive this star. This is in recognition of being the regional winners for our Travel Plan and is a wonderful achievement. A couple of children will be going into London in March for the celebration event.

Last week the children across the school enjoyed dance workshops. The theme was antibullying and they performed to some of the music from Matilda. Its great to bring experts in to share their knowledge and passion.



Our new Buddy Bench has arrived. This was something the School Council wanted and their fund raising through selling hot chocolate and cookies has been very successful. They now need to decide where it is to go.

I have been reviewing our attendance figures and am disappointed by some of what I see. Good attendance in school makes a huge difference to children and their futures. There is very clear evidence to back this up. The same goes for being in school on time. Teachers start to work with children from the minute they come into school and missing any of the learning adds up. Where absence is unavoidable, due to significant illness, I completely understand but otherwise we need the children in. I want every child to do as well as they are able and we will make sure we keep driving ourselves to achieve this, but I need everyone to help by having their child in school, on time, every day possible.

I have noted the footballers training hard for their first match, next week, and wish them well. As long as they do their best as a team, supporting each other and showing the best of sporting behaviours, we will be proud of them. Never-the-less a goal or two would also be great.

Have a lovely weekend.  
Jeremy Fisher



<p><b>SAFE</b></p> <p>We move around school in a safe manner. We follow instructions to keep ourselves safe. We keep hands, feet and unaided words to ourselves. We use equipment safely. We stay safe online. We talk to an adult if we feel unsafe.</p>	
<p><b>READY</b></p> <p>We wear correct uniform. We arrive at school on time. We have our equipment ready. We show that we are listening and ready to learn.</p>	
<p><b>RESPECT</b></p> <p>We listen when others speak and we respect the property of our friends and the school. We have an understanding of others cultures and beliefs. We respect that everyone has a right to learn.</p>	

Type of query	Member of staff to contact
Safeguarding/child protection	Mr Fisher, Mrs Cracknell, Miss Borgeat, Mrs Poole and Mrs Richardson
Any issues relating to your child or another child in the class	Email admin to arrange a meeting, sometimes a phase leader may join this meeting
If you do not feel the issue has been resolved or you may need more advice.	<p><b>Step 1</b> Phase Leader</p> <p>EYFS-Miss White Year 1 - 3- Mrs Christman Yea 4 - 6 -Mr Chandler</p> <p><b>Step 2</b> Deputy Headteacher Mrs Hannah Cracknell</p> <p><b>Step 3</b> Headteacher- Mr Fisher</p>
Inclusion/ Special Educational Needs	Miss Borgeat
Looked After and Previously Looked After Children	Mrs Cracknell
Payments/Finance	Miss Byrne Mrs Tilbury
Admissions	Miss Byrne
Complaints	Please refer to school complaints policy on the <u><a href="#">website</a></u> .

# Upcoming Events

2025  
2026

## January

Monday 5 <sup>th</sup>	Back to school
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## February

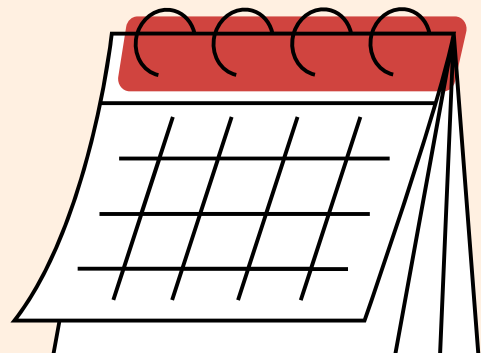
Friday 6 <sup>th</sup>	Year 3 trip to Celtic Harmony camp
Friday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Tales together
Friday 13 <sup>th</sup>	End of half term finish normal time
Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Inset day - School closed
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Back to school

## March

Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Y6 Bike ability - all week
Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Rock steady concert
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Y5 trip to Knebworth House
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Tales together
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup>	End of term 1:15pm finish

## April

Monday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Everyone back to school
Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup>	Y1 visit to Hertford Museum



# NO OUT SIDERS

There are No Outsiders at Hollybush.  
Everyone is welcome in our school.  
No one is the same, but everyone is equal.

In our assemblies in the last two weeks we have covered:

Happy New Year!

The fireworks in London for NYE captured flags from around the world on the Millennium Eye.

In our assembly, we watched part of the display, and listened to the poem: 'This is what England means to me' by Sonny Green.

Here's what England means to me - the real England.

When it's sunny, it's too hot. When it's cold, the weather's rubbish.  
England to me is a cup of tea, how many sugars? I'm sweet enough.

England to me is Caribbean barbers with a sharpish trim, it's  
Christian neighbours saying Happy Hanukkah mate, and Muslim  
mums saying Merry Christmas love.

And you think you're seeing flags now? Wait until the World Cup's  
on, then you'll know about flags, my son.

'Cos this is what England means to me, it's about loving each other  
no matter what colour you are, where you're from or who your god  
is.

Because this is England. This is the United Kingdom.

The children had some amazing responses to the poem and could  
explain how this was No Outsiders.

Big shout out to Ernie in Year 3 who had some fantastic ideas that  
he shared.



Mubinul opened his fish and chip shop on Christmas day and  
served free food for anyone who wanted it.

Mubinul particularly offered his fish and chips to older  
people, vulnerable members of the community or anyone who  
was alone on Christmas day.

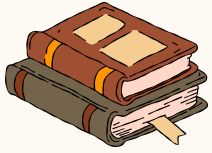
People could have chunky fish fingers, fish and chip barns and  
fresh tea and coffee, all free.

Mubinul said, "We give back and we do a lot for charities. It's in  
our belief, in our religion. Christmas day was one of those  
things where we don't celebrate ourselves so we would have  
been just shut. So it was like, why don't we give  
back to the community?"

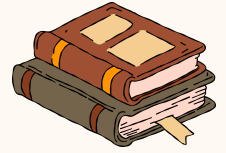
We discussed how this was No Outsiders, and we spoke about  
the fact that Mubinul, a Muslim, who does not celebrate  
Christmas, spent the day supporting his community,  
something that is very special in his religion.

We thought about how we could be kind-hearted like Mubinul.





# Staff book review



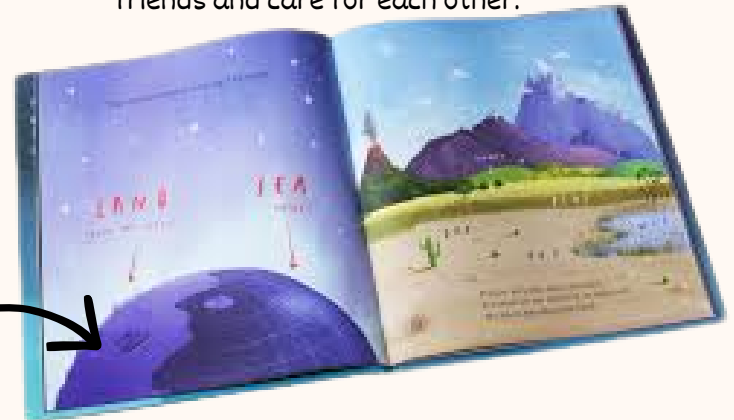
## By Miss Borgeat

### HERE WE ARE

### BY OLIVER JEFFERS

Here We Are is a lovely, gentle book about our amazing planet and the people who live on it. Oliver Jeffers explains the world in a fun and simple way.

This book reminds us to be kind, to look after the Earth, and to remember that everyone is different — and that's what makes the world special. My favourite part is the page where we see all the different people of the world holding hands. I love it because it shows that even though everyone is different, we can all be friends and care for each other.



Oliver Jeffers has always been one of my favourite illustrators. I always find it really cool when authors are illustrators too! To be able to do both jobs is absolutely amazing!

The pictures are bright and interesting, with lots to look at and talk about. Readers will enjoy spotting animals, people, and tiny details on every page.

You can actually learn how to draw like him:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PuUIL6nDKN8>

What makes Here We Are really special is its message. It gently reminds us that everyone is different, that the world is something to look after, and that kindness matters. It's not preachy — just warm, thoughtful, and full of heart.

This is a wonderful read-aloud book for all children and a lovely starting point for conversations about the world we live in and the people who share it with us. I think it is a true modern classic that feels just as comforting every time you open it.



★ Highly recommended for classrooms, bedtime reading, and anyone who enjoys a book that makes you feel good about the world!

# The Nest

Welcome back from the Nest, and what a hectic start we have had. We have been studying rocket launches and space exploration. The children have been having a great time dressing up as astronauts and performing their rocket launch countdown during play.

Lots of fun has been had in our role-play vets, where the children have been looking after the animals, making them feel better. We have also been examining the various textures of the animals.



# Nursery

Welcome back from Nursery, and a warm welcome to our new children. Everyone has settled back so well. We have started learning a sound each week, the children love meeting Ellie and Fred.

We have been exploring different ways to make marks, going round the school making chalk rubbings.

We have been thinking about the number three and different ways to make it using our fingers.

we have also been exploring emotions and what they may look like. Here we are showing our different emotions!



# Reception

Welcome back from Reception, and what a busy start we've had to 2026! We have started the year thinking about the top of the world, The Arctic, and the bottom of the world, Antarctica. We have been exploring what it is like in these very cold places, and learning about some of the animals that live there, as well as what these animals do to stay warm.

In Maths we have been subitising dice patterns. We've been practicing our subitising skills by playing lots of different dice games together. The children have shown some real enthusiasm as we continue to learn to read and write new sounds in Read Write Inc, and have enjoyed applying their skills in their play, writing lots of shopping lists, creating labels for zoo animals, and more!

## Year 1

Year 1 have been continuing their DT project this week, exploring our Destination Question: 'How can we design and build strong spaceships for travelling into space?' The children have been looking at how they can design and build strong spaceships for travelling into space. They have had fun exploring the use of slots, tabs, flanges and braces while building their prototype models. Their cutting and sticking skills were very impressive!

In computing, we have started our new programming unit. There was a 'buzz' of excitement when the class were introduced to Bee-bots. we can't wait to learn to program them to follow instructions next week.



# Year 2

This week the children have been busy with lots of exciting learning. In writing, we have been exploring how to use simple words and phrases to describe pictures and objects linked to memories.

We have also been learning about road safety. The children looked at different methods of getting to the other side of the road, talked about how to cross the road safely — stop, look, listen, think — and enjoyed role-playing different scenarios. They showed great awareness and enthusiasm as they practised being safe pedestrians.

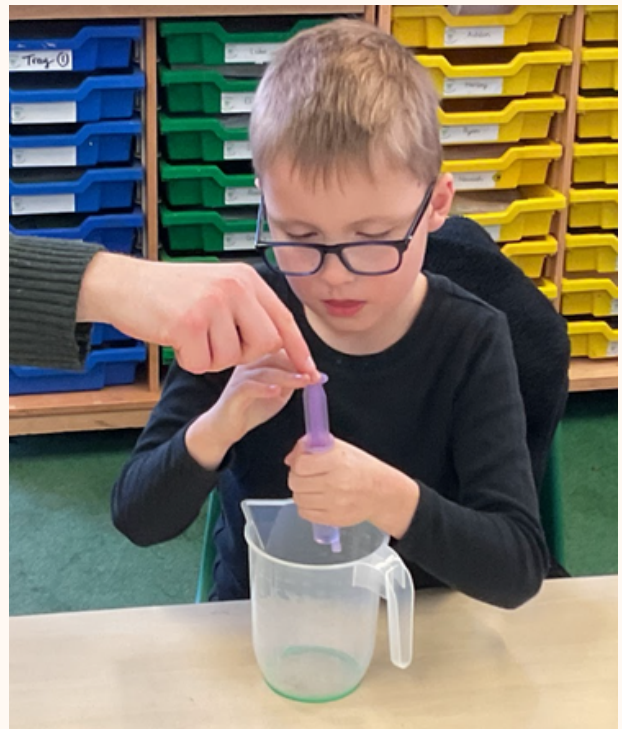
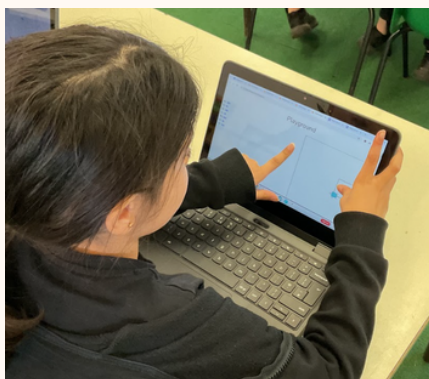
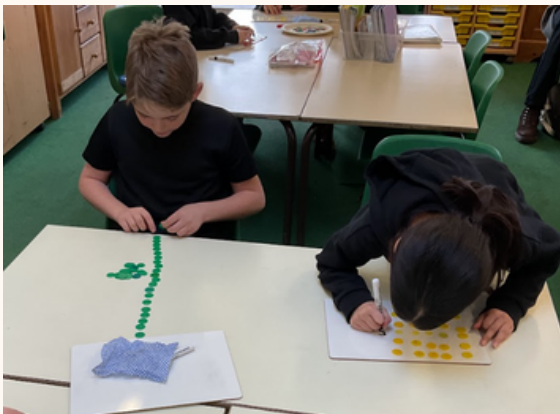
In computing, we have been exploring simple instructions and why they need to be clear. The children used Beebots to test out their ideas, discovering that robots can only follow instructions that are short, simple, and in the right order. This has helped them understand how important clear communication is. It has been a lovely start to the term with lots of practical, hands-on learning, and the children have shown fantastic focus and curiosity throughout.

# Year 3

Year 3 have had a wonderfully busy and exciting week in school. The children have been exploring the story *Zara's Last Garden*, thinking about how the garden changes and discussing the feelings of the characters in more depth. In maths, they have been multiplying and dividing 2-digit numbers using a range of different methods, including partitioning, number lines, and arrays, and they are becoming much more confident in choosing strategies that suit them. The class have also been diving into our Bronze Age topic, learning about tools, homes, and daily life, and they were especially fascinated by how people survived using simple materials. All this learning has helped build even more excitement for our upcoming trip to Celtic Harmony, where the children will be able to see real-life examples of what they have been studying.

# Year 4

It's certainly full steam ahead in Year 4 at the start of 2026. We have started lots of new topics and covered a lot in the last two weeks. I've been teaching for quite a long time but never, until now, unpacked the delights of Lewis Carroll's poem, Jabberwocky. Using nonsense words to help the children understand the function of different words has really worked. I'm looking forward to reading their own descriptions of the Jubjub bird and the Bandersnatch. In our maths lesson there has been a significant focus on identifying factor pairs using counters, and how they can be used when multiplying a 2-digit number by a 1-digit number; we're getting there ... In science, we're already onto lesson 3, investigating melting and in computing the children have been using an online turtle. In today's RE lesson (12.01.2026), I was really impressed how the children were able to identify key qualities in Rama in the story, Ramayana. Hindus, look up to Rama and some of the other key characters in the story; it helps them with daharma - their duty.



# Year 5

Welcome back, we hope you had a wonderful break over Christmas. It's been wonderful to see the children return with such enthusiasm, curiosity, and energy. We've jumped straight into our learning, and the classrooms are already buzzing with great ideas, thoughtful discussions, and plenty of hard work. We're looking forward to a fantastic term of learning and growth together.

One of the highlights has been reading Finding Bear, the sequel to The Last Bear. The children remembered the first book with such excitement, and their eagerness to continue the story has filled our reading sessions with lively discussion, thoughtful predictions, and a real buzz for what comes next.



Last Friday, the children took part in a dance workshop.

On Friday, a dance teacher came into teach us dance.

We had a great time. We did a dance to revolting children from Matilda. It was so fun! She taught us some dance techniques such as canon and unison - Chloe and Cecilia.



In music this term, we've been exploring how colour can be represented through music. Our big question is: How can music help us celebrate the colours and energy of Holi?

The children have enjoyed representing music through colour and shapes.





# Year 6



Well, what a great start to the year we are having in year 6! The children have come back from the Christmas break excited and ready to learn. Their behaviour has been excellent so far and I am so pleased that the class are beginning to emerge as real role models for the rest of the school. The children have done some fantastic learning too; showing great understanding of ratios in maths, wonderful rhythm and coordination in dance and have just written some wonderful diary entries based on 'Boy in the Tower' by Polly Ho-Yen. With booster groups, times table clubs and new reading lessons we are now firmly on our way to success in SATS in the summer term.

# ONLINE SAFETY

This week, I've had a number of conversations with members of staff about computing lessons. It's great to hear how computing is being actively taught across the year groups. Our lesson design now incorporates a slide (see below) summarising what 'Computer engineers' do. We also have a slide summarising online safety for KS1 and KS2. Teachers will use other opportunities to investigate online safety in more detail. It's really important that teachers, parents and carers talk about the online world that many of us spend so much time on. Sometimes, these conversations will be difficult. It's important that clear screen time boundaries (5 simple ways to help under-5s manage screen time) are set from an early age.

## We are Computer Engineers

We make things, solve problems, and use the digital world safely.

