



# HORMEAD (VA) CofE FIRST & NURSERY SCHOOL

## Newsletter

*"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" John 10:10*

RESILIENCE

COURAGE

ASPIRATION  
HONESTY

KINDNESS

CO-OPERATION

LOVE

Issue No: 2 25/26

Dear Families,

The curriculum is now in full swing, and it is such a joy to see all the children happily settled back into the routines of learning. Nothing makes me smile more than watching them run into school in the morning, full of enthusiasm and ready for the day ahead. We've been blessed with a few crisp, dry days, which have made playtimes extra fun, with plenty of laughter filling the playground.

Bonjour! Today we celebrated European Languages Day, and what a fabulous day it has been! Every class has embraced the joy of exploring new languages and cultures.

Nursery had great fun learning how to say hello in French and even found France on the world map. The children sang "Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes" and "Frère Jacques" in French, before enjoying a little French food tasting – a real treat! Reception children learned to count from 1 to 5 in different languages. They twirled and spun to European folk music and created colourful flags representing different countries. Year 1 discovered how to say hello in many European languages using Google Translate – including Russian, which they were amazed to find out is a language in Europe. They also had their very own food tasting afternoon with delicious bites from Italy, Spain, and Germany.

Year 2 explored greetings and phrases in French, Spanish, German, and Italian, and even enjoyed reading Little Red Riding Hood in French. Oak Class worked in pairs on laptops to research a European country of their choice, uncovering fascinating facts about populations, capital cities, foods, and famous landmarks.

The school has been buzzing with excitement and curiosity all day – what a wonderful way to celebrate the richness of languages and cultures across Europe.

Looking ahead, I am delighted to share that over the next few weeks we will be opening our doors for tours for prospective parents. This is always such a special time of year for me, as it gives me the chance to show visitors just how wonderful our little school is and to watch our children shine as they go about their learning. We are incredibly proud of the way we make learning fun, meaningful, and engaging, while also ensuring every child receives the very best education possible.

As many of you know, these are challenging times for small village schools, with declining pupil numbers across the country. We want to do everything we can to keep our precious school alive and thriving. Please do continue to spread the good news about our school to friends, family, and neighbours.



We will also be holding a very special Open Morning on **Saturday 4th October** – a chance for prospective families to come and see for themselves the warmth, joy, and excellence that make our school such a unique place to learn and grow.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. Together, we can ensure our school continues to flourish and provide a place where children love learning, love life, and love being part of our community. This week's newsletter is all about the amazing work we do in English across the school.

**Mrs Cowler, Headteacher**

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## Reasons to Celebrate

<b>Class Stars of the Week</b>	☆☆☆ ☆☆☆	<b>You make us so proud!</b>
<b>Hedgehogs</b>	<b>Ember</b>	For always being a kind friend
<b>Hedgehogs</b>	<b>Riley</b>	For always being kind and helpful to her friends and teachers
<b>Cherry</b>	<b>Nazar</b>	For being such an amazing role model for our class.
<b>Cherry</b>	<b>Charlie</b>	For coming into school and getting on with busy fingers.
<b>Willow</b>	<b>Luca Castronovo</b>	Amazing effort in all his learning and being an excellent role model
<b>Willow</b>	<b>Amelia Bates</b>	For always showing aspire in her learning and making the right choice
<b>Birch</b>	<b>Albie Hennessy</b>	For some fantastic maths work this week
<b>Birch</b>	<b>Spencer Britton</b>	For always showing all the school values and showing excellent learning behaviours
<b>Oak Y3</b>	<b>Leo Shurety</b>	Applying what he had learned in English to write a great character conversation
<b>Oak Y4</b>	<b>Louis Doherty-Huggins</b>	Applying prior knowledge and showing aspire in maths
<b>Oak Y3</b>	<b>Harry Cockerton</b>	For recalling lots of information for previous RE lessons
<b>Oak Y4</b>	<b>Fred Brown</b>	For creating and illustrating a fantastic story in English

### Values Hearts

Over the year, children who have been 'caught' showing our school values, will be awarded a values heart in assembly. Hearts can be awarded from adults in school, from children and from you!

- Love** - Adeline in Y1
- Cooperation** -
- Courage** - Amelia in Y1, Harry in Y1
- Kindness** -
- Honesty** -
- Resilience** - Archie in Y1
- Aspiration** - Arnie in Nursery

### HOUSE POINT AWARD

Congratulations to the following children on completion of their House point card:

- BRONZE AWARD:** Travis in Year 1
- SILVER AWARD:**

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## Getting to know our School Governors

### Reverend James Sawyer



Hello, I'm Reverend James Sawyer, the Rector of St Nicholas' Church, Hormead, which serves the communities of Great and Little Hormead, and Hare Street. I've been part of the community since September 2018 and look after four other churches in Wyddial, Anstey, Brent Pelham and Meesden too. I'm also the Assistant Rural Dean for the Buntingford Deanery which covers 25 parishes in the Buntingford/Baldock/Royston area.

I'm keen to ensure that Hormead Church of England First School offers the very best start in education for any child wishing to attend from our catchment area.

I have the joy of visiting the school and leading Collective Worship every week or welcoming the children and their families to special school services at St Nicholas' Church. I also visit on other occasions in my role as a School Governor and trained in the phonics programme to support children in their learning by regularly listening to children read.

I live locally with my family. My youngest daughter worked as a Classroom Assistant at Hormead before training with the school through its links with the University of Hertfordshire, to be a teacher. After a year teaching in another school, she's now returned as a member of staff.

Part of my role is to be a Foundation Governor at Hormead School with responsibility for maintaining our Christian distinctiveness in our values and policies. I play an active role with my Governor colleagues in supporting Mrs Cowler and the staff team at our school. I've spent the past seven years on the Curriculum Committee and I'm looking forward to a new season on the Finance committee. I'm the link Governor for RE and Computing, and I'm the Governor with responsibility for the Worship Council and overseeing GDPR compliance.

Before being ordained, I had a 30-year career in graphic design and marketing. I'm married to Rosie, a psychotherapist working with children and young people.

## Fun in Forest School



Happy Autumn Equinox to everyone. This year it fell on Monday 22nd September - on that day we experienced 12 hours of sunlight and 12 hours of night time. From now on, until the Winter solstice, each day has 4 minutes less daylight.

In Forest School we've enjoyed sunny days. We've done some yoga and lots of balancing. We've expressed gratitude for the Summer (ice cream and beach trips and camping holidays and swimming). We've lit some fairy fires to symbolise us



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taking light into the darker months ahead. We are using our Forest School names, using alliteration to make them sound good and adding an action to make them memorable. I can't wait to share them all with you soon. Autumn is a beautiful season, enjoy the displays of golden colours.

**Ivy Eileen**

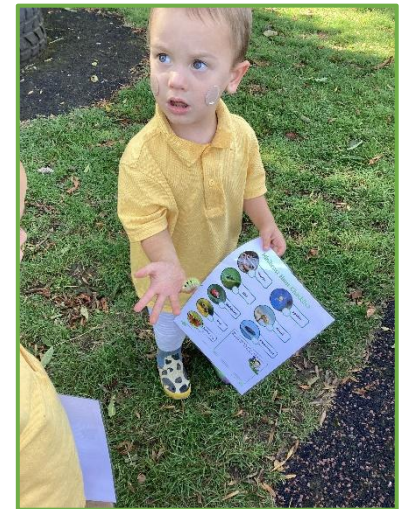
## Hoglets Preschool – 2-3 year olds



The children absolutely loved our theme of insects and bugs last week. Our book of the week was *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, which was a big hit during story time. Inspired by the story, the children had a fantastic time creating their own caterpillars using potatoes dipped in paint. We also held a fruit tasting session where the children sampled a variety of fruits. Some adventurous little ones tried exotic options like mango and lemon, while others happily stuck to strawberries and grapes.



One of the highlights was our bug hunt across the field, where the children discovered a surprisingly large caterpillar, sparking lots of excitement and curiosity! Our tuff tray was a firm favourite too, as the children hunted for bugs hidden in the soil and uncovered 'worms' cleverly made from spaghetti. Adding to the fun, we were delighted to welcome two special visitors giant snails named Bingo and Steve! The Hoglets loved watching them slowly explore their new environment over a few days.



This week, the *Gruffalo* theme has captured the children's imaginations once again! We've been making "Gruffalo crumble" in the tuff tray and creating colourful Gruffalo collage pictures using a variety of materials. To develop fine motor skills, the children used brown playdough and small sticks to make the spikes on the Gruffalo's back—a wonderfully hands-on craft that everyone enjoyed.

**Mrs Eves, Mrs Plumb and Mrs Villar**

## Hedgehogs Nursery – 3-4 year olds

Over the past few weeks, our Nursery children have been busy exploring language, creativity, and emotions through a variety of engaging activities. As part of our focus on the rhymes *Baa Baa Black Sheep* and *A Sailor Went to Sea*, the children have been practising key phonological skills including alliteration, rhyme, and syllable identification. These sessions have helped deepen their understanding of sounds in a fun and musical way. During Busy Fingers time, the children have been developing their mark-making skills using a variety of materials such as pens, pencils, and crayons.



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They've enjoyed experimenting with different types of marks and using stencils to form different movements with their hands.

In their choosing time, the children have been drawing shapes and faces linked to our ongoing theme of feelings, encouraging them to express and recognise different emotions. They've also been hand printing with paint and then using their mark-making skills to create imaginative "feeling monsters" – a wonderful combination of sensory play and emotional exploration.

Our book of the week is *Guess How Much I Love You*, which has sparked lovely discussions about family members, feelings, and emotions. We've made strong links with

The Colour Monster, helping the children connect emotions with different colours. During our Love of Reading sessions, we've also enjoyed *Kindness Makes Us Stronger*. The children explored verbs through action, and a character's exploration of sound inspired us to try out a range of instruments, developing both listening skills and expressive language. Keep up the great work Hedgehogs, we are so proud of all of you!



**Miss O'Connor, Mrs Larman, Mrs Stuart**

## Maple Class



This half term in Maple Class, we've been having a fantastic time exploring the wonderful world of Julia Donaldson's book, *The Oak Tree*. The children have absolutely loved looking at the bright, colourful pictures as they listen to the story about how a tiny acorn grows into a mighty oak tree. It's been lovely to see their curiosity bloom alongside the story!

To bring the book to life, we set up different sensory trays filled with real acorns and oak tree leaves. The children enjoyed touching and exploring these natural treasures, which helped them connect even more with the story and the changing seasons.

In Phonics, we've been focusing on listening carefully to different sounds around us. Linking this to our story theme, the children have tuned in to sounds like the wind rustling through the trees, the crackle of snowstorms, and the joyful noises of children playing outside. It's been wonderful to see their ears perk up as they identify these environmental sounds!

During our Pre-writing sessions, the children have been busy practicing their fine motor skills, which are so important for their writing journeys. Everyone has made huge progress already, and it's clear that all their hard work is paying off.

A big well done to all the children in Maple Class!

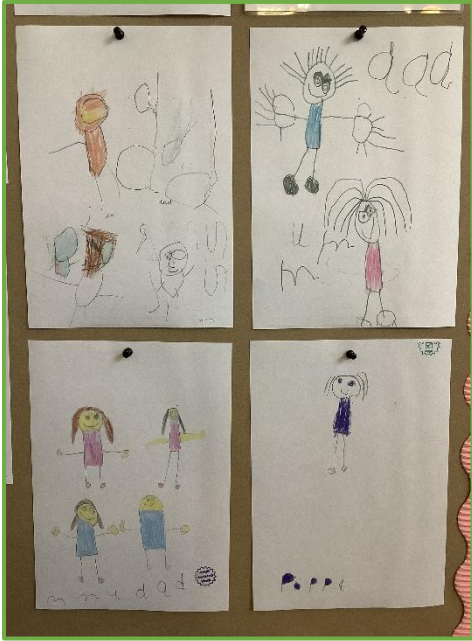
**Ms Lynch, Mrs Wade and Mrs Dunn**



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## Cherry Class – Reception



In Cherry class the children have been learning lots of new phonemes in their phonics lessons. By the end of the week we will have learned twelve already! We are working together to sound talk and blend words to help us to read and their enthusiasm in their learning is brilliant to see.

In literacy lessons this half term we are creating books about ourselves so that we can show them to other people and they can learn all about us. So far, we have created front covers, practised writing our names as the title of our books and written about important people in our families. We are beginning to use our phonics to help us spell words and we're very



excited to share our books when we're finished!

*Miss Sawyer and Mrs Griffin*

## Willow Class – Year 1



We have had a fantastic start to the year in Willow Class, exploring some wonderful stories together. Our first text, *The Tree and the River*, has taken us on a journey through time, showing how landscapes, buildings, and technology change. The children loved spotting the differences on each page and developed a real affection for the tree at the heart of the story, which we named *The Bright Tree*. They enjoyed following its growth and transformations over the years, resulting in fantastic list poems about trees.

More recently, our focus has been on *Jasper's Beanstalk*. This story has sparked great curiosity about growing plants, and the children have been

quick to make links with the traditional tale of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. We have been practising single word labels, learning how important it is that they are written clearly and attached to the correct object. The children have also been working hard on using capital letters for the days of the week in their captions.

This week, Willow Class impressed us with their equipment lists for Jasper, carefully choosing what he would need to plant his bean. They showed excellent independence in using their phonics to sound out unfamiliar words and produced some excellent writing. Next week, we will build on this by writing a set of instructions for planting a seed or bean, which we hope the children will be able to use at home.

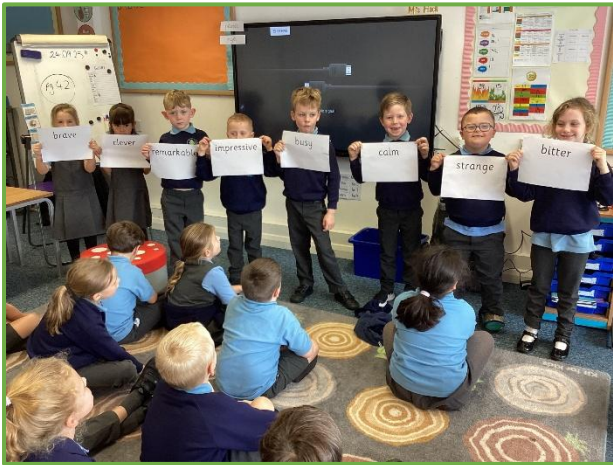
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We are so proud of how enthusiastically the children have embraced their English learning and how confidently they are settling into Year 1. Well done everyone!

**Mrs. Ward, Miss Webb and Miss Ellis**

## *Birch Class – Year 2*



This week in English, the children began reading *Frog and the Stranger* by Max Velthuis. The story is about a rat who arrives at the edge of the wood, and the other animals quickly decide they do not like having a stranger among them. Frog, who is naturally friendly, chooses to find out whether Rat is really as unpleasant as the others believe. As the story unfolds, Rat shows he is intelligent and kind, and the other animals learn that first impressions can be misleading.

In class, the children have been using their inference skills to understand Rat more deeply. They have explored his thoughts and feelings, comparing these to what the other animals think of him at the start of the story. This has encouraged them to

think about how a character's personality can be revealed through their actions and others' perspectives. The children have also been expanding their vocabulary by describing Rat's personality rather than just his appearance. They discussed and sorted words, deciding which were most and least applicable to him.

Reading groups are now fully underway. In reading records, you may notice a stamp showing 'Decoding', 'Prosody', or 'Comprehension' for each lesson, as the children focus on different reading skills with a range of books. The children enjoyed naming their own groups and are now part of Story Safari, Imagination Explorers, The Chapter Chasers, or Story Detectives. These groups are helping to make reading a collaborative and enjoyable experience while building essential skills.

**Mrs Finch and Mrs Buckmaster**

## *Oak Class – Year 3 & 4*



Over the past few weeks, Oak Class have been diving into the brilliant book *Arthur and the Golden Rope*. The children have loved following Arthur's adventure and then using it as inspiration to become authors and illustrators themselves!

We began by learning how speech marks work and thinking about how dialogue can help tell a story. Once we had mastered that, we imagined brand new adventures for Arthur to go on so that Thor would agree to help him. The ideas were so creative. From daring quests to unusual challenges. Each child made their own version of the story.

To plan things out, we designed detailed storyboards, deciding exactly how our stories would progress and what would happen in each part. After that, the hard work began: turning those plans into



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graphic novels. The class spent lots of time drawing characters, designing settings, and carefully writing the story to match their pictures. The end results were fantastic, and we had great fun sharing our finished graphic novels with our friends.

It's been a brilliant few weeks of storytelling, art, and imagination, and we're really proud of how much effort everyone put into their work. Next up, we'll be moving on to another exciting book: *The King Who Banned the Dark*.

***Mr Armes, Miss Wentworth, Ms Moretto and Mrs Crowe***

### **Online Safety Tip of the Week**

As parents, we're all aware that children often access games and apps that aren't always age appropriate. These age restrictions exist for good reason — to protect young minds that are still developing and may not yet be ready to manage certain content or online interactions.

A helpful resource I came across recently is [Common Sense Media](#). It offers clear, balanced reviews of games, apps, and websites, along with suggested age ratings and advice tailored for parents. It's a great way to stay informed and make confident decisions about what your child is engaging with online.

Let's keep working together to create a safer digital world for our children.

**Mrs Cowler**

### **Brief from the Office:**

#### **Contact**

- For all **general** emails and to **report absence**, please email Elaine - [admin@hormead.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@hormead.herts.sch.uk)
- For anything to do with **finance, clubs or Arbor**, please email Linda - [office@hormead.herts.sch.uk](mailto:office@hormead.herts.sch.uk)

**Did you know**, you can raise free donations on all your online shopping with over 8,000 retailers for Hormead School. It is so easy to do and doesn't cost you a penny more when you shop.

Simply sign up to **#easyfundraising** to support us:

<https://join.easyfundraising.org.uk/hormeadschool/3O44HO/dds1/U5SijpKB/DSM54/facebook/22.92>

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## Calendar Dates coming up

\*any changes or additions to the diary dates are written in red

September 2025	
Monday 29th	Y3 & 4 Athletics Development Day – Sele School
October 2025	
Thursday 2nd	School Census Day
Tuesday 7th	Flu Clinic pm (Reception to Y4)
Thursday 9th	10am - HARVEST FESTIVAL at St Nicholas Church led by Year 2's
Friday 10th	Miss O'Connor's last day
	Newsletter 03
Tuesday 14th	9:15am all parents invited to 'Stay and watch a Phonics' session
Thursday 16th	World Food Day – details to follow
Friday 17th	3pm Cherry Class Celebration Assembly
Monday 20th	Parent Consultations (Y4 only) – 4pm start in classroom
Tuesday 21st	Parent Consultations (R to Y3) – 3pm start in hall
Wednesday 22nd	Black History Day
Friday 24th	Non-uniform Day / Cake Sale
	Newsletter 04
Sunday 26th	Miss O'Connor's baby due 😊
Mon 27th to Fri 31st	HALF TERM
	PTA Outdoor Classroom installation
November 2025	
Tuesday 4th	Stay and watch Phonics (Nursery, Reception, Year 1)
Wednesday 5th	FIREWORKS NIGHT (PTA fundraising event)
Friday 7th	3pm Willow Celebration Assembly
	Newsletter 05
Monday 10th	Anti-Bullying Week – Odd Socks Day
Tuesday 11th	11am Remembrance Service led by Willow Class
<b>Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Cherry Class trip to Duxford</b>
Friday 14th	3pm Birch Class Celebration Assembly
Wednesday 19th	Road Safety Day Class Activities
<b>Wednesday 19th</b>	<b>Birch Class trip to Hitchin Schools Museum</b>
Friday 21st	3pm Year 3 Celebration Assembly
	Newsletter 06
Monday 24th	Christmas Story Writing Week
Friday 28th	3pm Year 4 Celebration Assembly
December 2025	
Monday 1st	ASSESSMENT WEEK
Tuesday 2nd	10:30am Nativity Play (Cherry) Dress Rehearsal
Wednesday 3rd	10:30am – Nativity Play (Cherry Class)
	2pm – Nativity Play (Cherry Class)
Friday 5th	Newsletter 07
	3:30pm-5pm – Christmas Disco (PTA fundraising event)
Tuesday 9th	11am Festive Festival Dress Rehearsal
<b>Tuesday 9th</b>	<b>2:30pm - Festive Festival led by Willow and Birch (everyone welcome)</b>
<b>Tuesday 10th</b>	<b>2pm – performance at the Village Hall for the over 60's lunch</b>

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Wednesday 10th	5:30pm – Festive Festival led by Willow and Birch (hopefully outside – whole school welcome for mulled wine and mince pies!)
Friday 12th	Calendar Craft Day
Monday 15th	Children deliver calendars to local community
Wednesday 17th	Christmas Jumper Day & Christmas Lunch
	Visit from Father Christmas
Thursday 18th	10am – CHRISTINGLE SERVICE – Led by Year 4's
	Newsletter 08
	<b>School ends 1pm - End of Autumn Term</b>
<b>January 2026</b>	
Monday 5th	INSET DAY – school closed for staff training
Tuesday 6th	Children back to school – Start of Spring Term