



HORMEAD (VA) CofE FIRST & NURSERY SCHOOL

Newsletter

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



Issue No: 3 25/26

Dear Families,

As the crisp autumn air settles in and the trees around us turn golden, the school has been full of warmth.

This week we welcomed our school improvement partner, who came to look at writing across the school. It fills me with so much pride to see the wonderful work that begins right from our Nursery and flows all the way through to our older classes. She commented on how much she loves visiting our school - the friendly atmosphere, the happy hum of learning, and the way our children are always so engaged and eager to do their very best. It's such a credit to our amazing teaching team, who work so hard to make sure that every child is both challenged and happy in their learning. Hearing the children talk so enthusiastically about their English lessons and how determined they are to improve was a real highlight of my week.



As the evenings begin to draw in, it has been the perfect time for our Harvest Festival, beautifully led by our Year 2 class. What a joy it was to gather at St Nicholas Church to give thanks for the food we have and to remember those less fortunate. The children sang the Harvest Samba with great energy, complete with actions and even a surprise conga through the church, which had everyone smiling! A huge thank you to all the families who donated food items. The Buntingford Food Hub were truly touched by your generosity and asked us to pass on their heartfelt thanks.

In true autumn tradition, I'm delighted to share that the farmer called - it's potato picking season! Weather permitting, get your flat caps ready, as we'll all be heading out on Wednesday morning to gather our harvest. It's always a highlight of the year for the children, and I have no doubt there'll be plenty of potatoes making their way onto dinner tables that evening.



You may also have noticed that we have some construction workers on site at the moment - never a dull moment here at Hormead! We recently found out that a local school was giving away a mobile classroom, and as we had first refusal, we decided it was far too good an opportunity to miss. Work is now underway to prepare some of the unused land at the back of the school to make space for this new addition, which will be delivered over the half term break. The possibilities for this building are endless, so I won't be rushing into making any firm decisions just yet. Once it's up and ready for use, we'll take some time to explore the best ways to make the most of it, and I'll be sharing our plans with you in the new year.

Exciting times ahead!

Looking ahead, our wonderful PTA are already hard at work preparing for our **Fireworks Night on Wednesday 5th November**, just after half term. It's always one of the most spectacular and enjoyable evenings of the year - a real community celebration with food, fun, and fantastic pyrotechnics! To make it all happen, we really do rely on your support. A volunteer sign-up sheet will be going up next week for anyone able to lend a hand before, during, or after the event. As the saying goes, many hands make light work! Even if you can't volunteer, please do spread the word and bring along friends and family as it's sure to be a night to remember.

Wishing you all a lovely, cosy weekend. **Mrs Cowler, Headteacher**

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Reasons to Celebrate

Today we said goodbye for now to Miss O'Connor, who has stayed with us right up to the final stretch of her pregnancy. We are so grateful for her hard work, care, and dedication to the children in Hedgehogs Class. Thanks to her excellent organisation, everything is perfectly in place for the months ahead. On behalf of everyone at Hornead, I'd like to wish her and Luke all the very best as they prepare to welcome their little girl into the world. We can't wait to share the happy news once she arrives.



Class Stars of the Week



You make us so proud!

Hedgehogs	Poppy Flanagan	For showing courage and talking more freely with her friends and adults.
Hedgehogs	Jude Bates	Settling into school life well and being positive
Cherry	Zac Paddington-Dark	Showing aspiration in writing
Cherry	Roman Kostur	For lovely manners and always holding the door open for an adult
Willow	Thomas Stanning	Amazing independent work and being such a kind and thoughtful member of willow class
Willow	Albie Lees	Excellent effort in his learning and super singing at the church.
Birch	Harper Pridmore	Using some lovely adjectives in her writing in English
Birch	Alex Hart	For his enthusiasm to his learning and showing aspiration in all areas of the curriculum
Oak Y3	Lenny Doust	Showing aspire and working hard in maths
Oak Y4	Theo Morrison	Impressing all of us with his effort in history and geography
Oak Y3	Noah Davidson	Coming into school sensibly every day all week
Oak Y4	Eddie Hall	Setting the example for the rest of the class when coming in from play

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** - Riley in N
- Cooperation** -
- Courage** - Elliot in Y2, Noah in Y3, Poppy in N
- Kindness** - Winnie in Y3, Archie in Y1
- Honesty** -
- Resilience** - Nazar in R
- Aspiration** - Aubrey in R, Freddie in N

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HOUSE POINT AWARD



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

BRONZE AWARD: Emilia Dodd, Aubrey Buzzing, Louie Stoker, Oliver Ambler

SILVER AWARD: Spencer Britton, Jackson Parkyn, Cruz Cartwright

GOLD AWARD: Dawid Kusion

Getting to know our School Governors

Rev. Norman Richards



I'm Norman Richards, and I'm truly delighted to serve as one of the Governors of Hormead School. It is always deeply rewarding to visit and witness firsthand the vibrant, caring, and educationally focused environment, underpinned by a clearly understood Christian ethos. Full credit goes to Mrs Lynda Cowler, our dedicated Headteacher, and to all the teaching and support staff who contribute so much to the life of the school.

The Governing Body is well led, and every member approaches their responsibilities with both seriousness and enthusiasm.

I am the retired Vicar of Buntingford, Aspenden, and Westmill. Since retiring in 2008, I have served part-time as a chaplain in A&E at Addenbrooke's Hospital and at Stansted Airport. I currently continue ministry as an Associate Minister at Christ Church, Ware.

Before ordination, I was a secondary school teacher in Essex from 1970 to 1981, eventually becoming Head of Geography in a large comprehensive school. I also coordinated the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme for over 80 young people.

I'm married to Alison, a former primary headteacher who now enjoys an "active retirement," mentoring trainee teachers at the University of Hertfordshire and supporting church schools within the Diocese of St Albans.

We are blessed with four daughters and a growing number of grandchildren.

Fun in Forest School

The Forest has been a hive of activity and exploration over the past couple of weeks! Hormead's youngest pupils have been busy making "conker caterpillars" - lovingly caring for them, giving them names, and showing them around the forest. It's been a joy to meet Colin Caterpillar, Katy Caterpillar, and all their friends.

Another group was treated to a magical encounter with a "loveliness of ladybirds," as hundreds of the colourful insects fluttered in, landing on tree trunks and under magnifying lenses for a closer look.



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We've also continued working on our Forest School names, crafting them from clay and natural autumn treasures. Can you guess who is called "Somebody Ant"?

After all the excitement, both children and adults have enjoyed a well-earned rest in the hammock!

We've also been lucky to receive some wonderful acts of kindness. A huge thank you to Mr. Mead for crafting a brand-new bench for our log circle — it's sturdy, comfortable, and very much appreciated. And a big shout-out to George and Beau, two friendly tree surgeons we met after Hormead's Harvest Festival, who generously donated some beautiful big beech logs for us to sit on.



Ivy Eileen

Hoglets Preschool – 2-3 year olds



It's been a fantastic couple of weeks here at Hoglets. Our topic last week was sizes and the children did so much. The tuff tray was a big hit filled with water, flowers, and a variety of different-sized containers, spoons, and bowls. The children enjoyed experimenting with pouring, scooping, and mixing, all while developing their understanding of big and small, more and less. We also introduced our size sorting bears activity, where the children practised matching different-sized bears to corresponding pictures. It was so lovely to see them

working together, showing our values of resilience and co-operation as they figured out where each bear belonged. These types of hands-on activities help build problem-solving skills and encourage teamwork – two things we love to see at Hoglets!



This week, we've been busy little investigators! The children have been exploring a whole host of sensory and seasonal activities – from ice play to making their own binoculars, there's been no shortage of creativity and curiosity. Our autumn investigation tray has also been a highlight, filled with conkers, pine cones, and acorns – perfect for little hands to explore. We've had some beautiful leaf painting sessions too, where the children experimented with colour, texture, and pattern.

A firm favourite this week has been the classic story "We're Going on a Bear Hunt". The children have absolutely loved listening to the story and joining in with the repeated phrases – "We can't go over it... we can't go under it..." It's been wonderful to see how engaged they are with the story and how confident they're becoming in retelling parts of it.

We've also introduced tooth brushing after snack time, and we couldn't be prouder of how well the children are doing. They've been learning about why it's

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important to brush our teeth and how long we need to do it to keep them clean and healthy. It's been great to see them taking responsibility and showing enthusiasm for this new part of our routine!

Mrs Eves, Mrs Plumb and Mrs Villar

Hedgehogs Nursery – 3-4 year olds



Over the past couple of weeks, the children in Hedgehogs class have been learning about what makes them unique and how to keep their bodies healthy. Last week, they had meaningful conversations with their keyworkers about their favourite things, exploring their own identities. In class, they enjoyed drawing observational pictures of themselves and creating clay faces, which helped them develop self-awareness and fine motor skills. Their curiosity about animals also grew, leading to imaginative play with small world animal figures. Additionally, the children explored creating unique patterns using autumnal objects, which encouraged creativity and sensory exploration.

This week's focus has been on healthy living. During keyworker activities, the children traced around their bodies on large sheets of paper and discussed how they stay healthy. Some shared important habits such as eating nutritious foods, getting enough sleep, and drinking plenty of water. The classroom has been buzzing with excitement around the doctors' role play area, where the children have loved pretending to be doctors, nurses, and patients, learning empathy and social skills through imaginative play.

To support early literacy, the children have been practicing name recognition by making their own bedroom signs and forming their names with playdough. We also enjoyed a wonderful trip to the local church to watch the harvest festival. This was a great opportunity to talk about how food is grown and how it is shared with those in need. The children have settled beautifully into Hedgehogs life, and we are incredibly proud of their progress.

Today is my last day in Hedgehogs and I just wanted to say how much I have enjoyed being the teacher in the nursery. I will miss the children very much and wish them well on their learning journey. I am looking forward to seeing how much they have grown when I return as a teacher next year.



Miss O'Connor, Mrs Larman, Mrs Stuart



Maple Class

Maple Class have been making the most of the beautiful Autumn season – and we've absolutely loved being able to explore the outdoors! Even as the weather starts to cool down, we've been heading outside to enjoy the fresh air.

One of our favourite places to visit has been Forest School. The children have had so much fun running through the fallen leaves, listening to them crunch under their feet – a simple joy that never gets old! It's been lovely watching them explore nature with such excitement and curiosity.

While we were out in our beautiful outdoor learning space, we also took some time to enjoy the story Hello Autumn by Jo Lindley. It was the perfect book to read while surrounded by the colours and sounds of the season. The children were really

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engaged and showed lots of smiles.

Indoors, we've continued our Autumn adventures with some fantastic sensory trays. These have been filled with pinecones, conkers, acorns, and other treasures from nature. The children have been using a range of skills to explore the different textures, shapes and weights of the objects – from scooping and sorting to simply enjoying the feel of them in their hands.

We're looking forward to seeing what other Autumnal surprises come our way as the weather continues to change.

Well done Maple Class!

Ms Lynch, Mrs Wade and Mrs Dunn

Cherry Class – Reception



This half term in Cherry class our topic is 'Let's Explore'. We've read lots of books about going on adventures or journeys, and in our Chatterbox sessions the children have been sharing their own adventures. They have talked about holidays and day trips they've been on, remembering how they got there, who they went with, and what activities they did when they arrived.



We looked at some maps of our local area, seeing what our school looks like from above. While planning a walk

to the park we checked the route we were going to take and carefully considered all the things we would need to bring with us on our journey, making a list to help us. We remembered everything we needed and had a lovely time exploring all the different equipment!

Miss Sawyer and Mrs Griffin

Willow Class – Year 1

This half term in Geography, our enquiry has been centred around the enquiry, "What is it like here?" The children have enjoyed exploring their immediate environment, beginning with a broad view of the United Kingdom and gradually zooming in to England, our town of Buntingford, and finally our very own school grounds. Through this journey the children have gained a stronger sense of place and a deeper understanding of just how big our world really is.



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The children have learned how aerial images provide a unique perspective, helping them see familiar locations in new ways. They have also investigated a range of map types, developing an awareness of how different maps serve different purposes. Using simple maps, the children have practised navigating around the school, creating their own map keys to represent key features. As part of this enquiry, they have begun to think thoughtfully about what makes our school grounds special and are considering ideas for future improvements. These suggestions will be shared with our School Parliament, giving the children a real voice in shaping their environment.

Well done, everyone.

Mrs. Ward, Miss Webb and Miss Ellis

Birch Class – Year 2



In History this half term, we've been travelling back in time to discover what school life was like 100 years ago! The children have really enjoyed comparing classrooms from the past with their own experiences today. We've studied old photographs, discussed the differences and similarities, and learned about how lessons, equipment, and even behaviour expectations have changed over time.

It's been fascinating to hear the children's thoughts on which things they would have liked to keep from classrooms 100 years ago. The

most popular idea by far was to have their own individual wooden desks with lift-up lids and secret storage space inside! Although, judging by how full some of their trays are now, I can only imagine what treasures (and bits of scrap paper!) might end up inside those desks.

The children have been full of curiosity and enthusiasm, asking great questions and sharing plenty of interesting facts. I hope they've been coming home to tell you all about what they've discovered!

We'll be finishing off this topic with a very exciting trip to the Victorian School Museum in November. This will give the children a chance to step back in time and experience first-hand what it was really like to be a pupil in a classroom from 100 years ago.

Mrs Finch and Mrs Buckmaster



Oak Class – Year 3 & 4

This half term, Oak Class have been learning all about how life has changed for children over time. We have compared what childhood was like in the Tudor times, the Victorian era, and modern day. The children were fascinated to discover the kinds of jobs children once had. From working as servants and helping in workshops during Tudor times, to working in factories, coal mines, and as chimney sweeps in Victorian times!

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We've used pictures and historical reports as sources to help us learn about the past and understand why Lord Shaftesbury was such an important figure in improving children's lives. We also explored how children's leisure time has changed over the years. From homemade toys and outdoor games to the hobbies children enjoy today. We also looked at how in the Tudor times, there was a frost fair held on the River Thames!

Next week, we'll be finishing our topic by finding out about the diseases that affected children in the past and how healthcare has improved over time.

Mr Armes, Miss Wentworth, Ms Moretto and Mrs Crowe

Online Safety Tip of the Week 2

Do you know who your child is chatting with online?

Many games and apps have built-in chat features, and while they can be fun, they also open the door to strangers contacting your child. Some platforms don't have strong moderation or privacy controls by default.

Top Tip: Check the settings on your child's devices and apps — look for chat filters, privacy settings, and the ability to turn off in-game chat. Always remind your child:

Never share personal information or agree to chat with people they don't know in real life.

A helpful guide on managing this can be found on the Internet Matters website:

<https://www.internetmatters.org/>

Let's stay informed and proactive.

Mrs Cowler



Brief from the Office:

Contact

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

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SAVE THE DATE - PTA Events coming up next

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>

Calendar Dates coming up

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

October 2025	
Tuesday 14th	9:15am all parents invited to 'Stay and watch a Phonics' session
Wednesday 15 th	Provisional date for potato picking
Thursday 16th	World Food Day – Bring in a piece of fruit
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 😊

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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
Wednesday 12 th	Cherry Class trip to Duxford
Friday 14th	3pm Birch Class Celebration Assembly
	Bonkers Bottomless Bingo – PTA event
Wednesday 19th	Road Safety Day Class Activities
Wednesday 19th	Birch Class trip to Hitchin Schools Museum
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
Tuesday 9th	2:30pm - Festive Festival led by Willow and Birch (everyone welcome)
Tuesday 10th	2pm – performance at the Village Hall for the over 60's lunch
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
	School ends 1pm - End of Autumn Term
January 2026	
Monday 5th	INSET DAY – school closed for staff training
Tuesday 6th	Children back to school – Start of Spring Term



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