



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: 5 25/26

Dear Families,

Welcome back after what I hope was a relaxing and enjoyable half term break. It's been a busy and exciting first week, with our fantastic fireworks display right in the middle of it! As always, it takes a great deal of planning and preparation to make the evening run smoothly, but experience has definitely taught us that the more you put in beforehand, the easier it is on the day. This year was one of our smoothest yet, and that's down to the wonderful help and support from our parents and friends. Thank you so much to everyone who helped set up, to those who worked tirelessly on the night, and to the incredible Mr Mead and Ms Moretto who arrived very early to clear up the next morning.

A very special thank you must go to Mrs Buckmaster and Shelley Ward for all their hard work organising the event again this year – from the food and drinks to all the finer details that make the evening so enjoyable. This was their final year leading the event, and we are truly grateful for everything they've done over the years. We'll now be on the lookout for some new volunteers to step into their shoes next year — so please do get in touch if you might be interested in helping!



I was also so proud of the children who volunteered to help with the Pupil Parliament sweet raffle to raise money for the Air Ambulance. They are taking their roles very seriously and are so enthusiastic about their fundraising, including selling teddies this afternoon. The Air Ambulance volunteer who joined us for the fireworks messaged afterwards to say how polite and lovely our children were, and how grateful they are for our support. What wonderful feedback to receive!

This term is always a busy one, full of exciting learning, as well as the much-loved Hormead festive fun that begins to sneak in before we know it. (I am trying not

to think about Christmas just yet, but with nativity plans already being mentioned, I know it won't be long!)

One thing I'd like to mention is that we've noticed an increase in requests for children to be collected early from school. While we completely understand that sometimes there are important appointments that can't be avoided, it's becoming more common for early pickups to happen for less urgent reasons. This can be tricky for teachers, as it disrupts lessons and leaves work unfinished, which then needs to be caught up later. Please do try to avoid this wherever possible - it's important that we all model to children that learning time matters and that school comes first.

Before we get too caught up in festive preparations, our first important event of the term is our **Remembrance Service next week**, led by our wonderful Year 1 class. This is always one of the most poignant and special moments in our school calendar. Please do join us at the village memorial at 11am on Tuesday as we take time together to remember. Thank you, as always, for your continued support and enthusiasm for everything we do here at Hormead.

Mrs Cowler, Headteacher

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Reasons to Celebrate

Class Stars of the Week



You make us so proud!

Hedgehogs		
Cherry	Stanley Archibald	<i>For an amazing effort in phonics</i>
Willow Y1	Albie Mulberry-Laurie	<i>For being confident in maths and quick recall of number bonds to 10</i>
Maple Class	Ismaeel Touray	<i>For asking for more snacks using symbols</i>
Birch Y2	Elliot Villar	<i>For showing positive learning behaviours in all lessons all week</i>
Oak Y3	Amelia Tinklin	<i>For trying really hard to use the column method in maths</i>
Oak Y4	George Hodgkins	<i>For being super helpful during fireworks</i>

Values Hearts



Love		
Cooperation		
Courage		
Kindness	Eva Crippen	<i>For always showing kindness to children and adults</i>
Resilience	Sophia & Henry Barlow	<i>For keeping on trying to put on their shoes and being successful!</i>
Aspiration		

Baby news!



Surprise everyone, meet Iris-Rose the latest edition to our Hormead family.

Miss O'Connor went in for a caesarean section on the 22nd October as the little girl just refused to turn around! She weighed a lovely chunky 9lb4oz. Ellie and Luke are totally and utterly in awe of her and so are we!



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Fun in Forest School



What a beautiful Autumnal carpet has been laid down in our log circle this week, too beautiful to rake up just yet. In true seasonal spirit, we've completed a pumpkin trail around the forest, hunting for orange round veggies and tackling the challenges they've posed. The only spooky bird calls some of us guessed belonged to the barn owl and the raven. No one identified the spooky call of the great Northern diver, which has been used for scary sound effects in the Harry Potter films. Luckily for us Great Northern divers don't reside near Great Hornead! We played "trick or trunk" sometimes guessing the correct tree trunk and avoiding being tricked by Ivy Eileen's water gun.

We have also had fun being creative: making leaf bonfires or acting like our favourite fireworks. In addition to all this, one group befriended a bush cricket, another group rescued a moth with an injured wing, others spotted huge mushrooms, and some groups even caught falling beech leaves on their heads!



Ivy Eileen

Hoglets Preschool – 2-3 year olds

Welcome back, everyone! We have had such a fantastic first week back after the half term. The children returned so settled, happy, and ready to learn – it has been lovely to see their big smiles and excitement to start our new half term together.

This week our theme has been Bonfire Night, and the children have absolutely loved exploring all the sights and sounds of fireworks! We've had lots of wonderful conversations about the fireworks they've seen in the sky – from the bright colours and sparkles to the loud bangs and whooshes.

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We have been very creative this week with a variety of firework-themed activities. Painting with tubes to make colourful firework patterns, going on a nature walk to collect leaves and sticks, (which we used to make our own bonfire pictures), making edible sparklers using breadsticks, chocolate, and sprinkles too which was a definite favourite!

The children have also been working hard on their fine motor skills, using sparkly playdough to create their own fireworks. Alongside all the fun, we've been learning about firework and bonfire safety. The children showed great understanding when talking about the dangers of fire and how we can stay safe. We also discussed how firefighters help us if we are ever in danger – the children were so thoughtful and sensible in their responses.

It's been a bright and busy start to the half term, and we're so proud of how engaged and enthusiastic all the Hoglets have been. We're really looking forward to all the exciting learning ahead!

Mrs Eves, Mrs Plumb and Mrs Villar

Hedgehogs Nursery – 3-4 year olds



What a wonderful week we've had in Hedgehogs. The children have come back to nursery full of excitement and curiosity, and it's been lovely to see how well everyone has settled back into our routines. Our Theme was Fireworks and Winter Animals. This week we've been learning all about fireworks and fire safety. The children showed great creativity making their own sparklers using twigs collected from the forest, and they had so much fun creating splatter-paint firework pictures.

Alongside this, we explored the world of winter animals. Our autumnal tuff tray was a big hit,

and the children loved experimenting with conkers in the water tray, rolling them down tubes into sparkly firework water. In maths, our focus has been on patterns and sequencing. The children have been fantastic at recognizing and creating their own repeating patterns using colours, shapes, and natural materials. Our phonics sessions this week were linked to the nursery rhyme "Humpty Dumpty". The children enjoyed joining in with the song and exploring the different sounds and words. In music, we listened to Mozart, which tied in beautifully with the story "The Elves and the Shoemaker." The children thoroughly enjoyed the story and loved joining in with the music and movement activities inspired by it.



Next week, in phonics, our song will be "A Sailor Went to Sea," focusing on the /s/ sound. We'll also be introducing "What's in the Bag?" – a fun game where we explore different items that begin with the letter S.

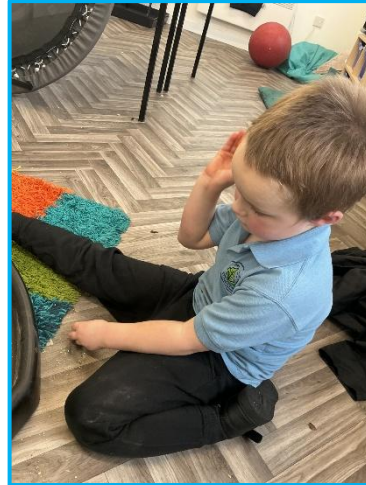
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We're so proud of how well the Hedgehogs have settled back into nursery life — it's been a joyful and busy start to the half term!

Mrs Larman, Mrs Stuart, Miss V Jackson

Maple Class



What a great first week back we've had in Maple Class! The children have come back to school full of smiles and energy, ready to learn and explore together. It's been lovely to see everyone so happy to be back in their routines and enjoying time with their friends and teachers.

This half term in Phonics, we are doing something a little bit different - we'll be focusing on listening to different musical instruments. The aim is to help the children tune into a range of sounds and begin to identify what they can hear. It's been such an engaging and sensory experience so far!

This week, we've explored drums and shakers, and the classroom has been alive with sound (and plenty of excitement!). The children have loved listening carefully to each instrument and having the chance to explore them hands-on. The sensory aspect of feeling the vibrations from the drums or hearing the gentle shake of the maracas has really added to their enjoyment.

It's been amazing to see how focused and enthusiastic everyone has been during these sessions. The children are developing their listening skills, turn-taking, and curiosity about music — all while having lots of fun.

We're really looking forward to discovering more instruments over the next few weeks and seeing how the children continue to make progress. If the first week is anything to go by, it's going to be a fantastic half term full of music, smiles, and learning!

Well done, Maple Class — what a brilliant start!

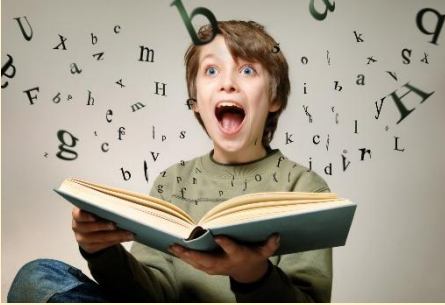
Ms Lynch, Mrs Wade and Mrs Dunn



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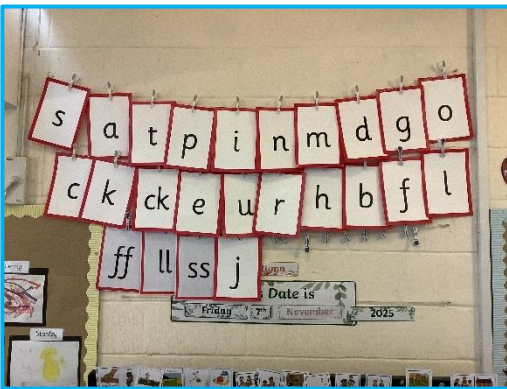


This week's Class Newsletter has a **Reading Focus**



At Hornead, we see reading as a doorway to a world of imagination, understanding, and possibility. We believe that every child deserves to discover the joy and power of reading. By the time our children leave us, they read with confidence and curiosity — for meaning, for pleasure, and with the courage to explore new challenges. Our readers learn to tackle unfamiliar words, ask questions to deepen their understanding, and connect what they read to their own lives and experiences. We celebrate reading in all its forms and encourage every child to see themselves as a reader — for pleasure, for learning, and for life. Teaching every child to read well sits at the heart of what we do.

Cherry Class – Reception

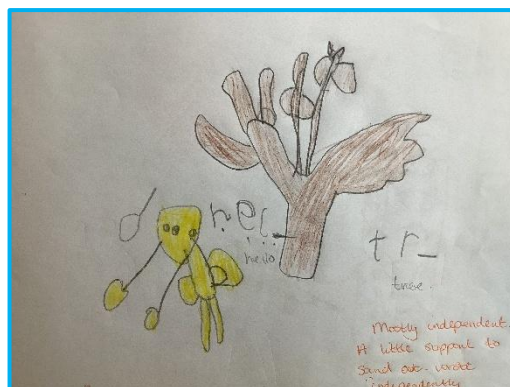


In Cherry class we have already learned an amazing 24 graphemes in our phonics lessons and the children show great enthusiasm for their learning. We have started sound talking and blending to read words and phrases and the children just keep getting better! Today we read the phrase 'jam on a hen' which we thought would be a very silly thing to see.

In our guided reading sessions, children practice their sounds before reading the words in their books. In our first weekly session we focussed on decoding - using our phonics to sound talk and read our words. We also looked at the pictures to find objects that start/end with a particular sound. In the next session we focus on prosody - this is reading with expression and using our 'storyteller voices' to help make the book sound more exciting for an audience. Sometimes we might make up actions for words. Finally, we have a session focussing on comprehension - we will discuss what the book was about and try to use full sentences to answer questions and share our thoughts about what we have read. Children have taken home reading books to show off their skills to the adults at home.

We have been applying our phonics knowledge to our writing in both phonics lessons and literacy. The children have made masses of progress since the start of the year and love to take on the challenge of spelling new words. We use our segmenting fingers as we sound talk words, so we know how many graphemes to write. If we don't know how to write a letter for a sound, that's ok! If we have forgotten or haven't learned a sound yet we make a line to show where it goes in the word. We also use our grapheme mats to help us.

Miss Sawyer and Mrs Griffin



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Willow Class – Year 1



We are becoming such confident readers in Willow Class! It is wonderful to see how our phonics knowledge is helping us make great progress. The children are doing an amazing job of applying both their existing knowledge and the new

sounds we are learning each week. Their pronunciation is improving every day; focusing on saying short, clear sounds (without adding an “uh” to the end) is supporting not only our reading but our writing too!

The children have settled beautifully into their reading practice sessions and are now confident with our three weekly focuses: decoding and blending for reading, prosody (expression and intonation), and comprehension. Tricky words are still the hardest challenge, but we continue to practise these daily. To help build fluency, we sound out unfamiliar words within a sentence and then re-read the sentence several times until we can read it smoothly and confidently. This strategy is helping the children to recognise words more quickly and become fluent, expressive readers.

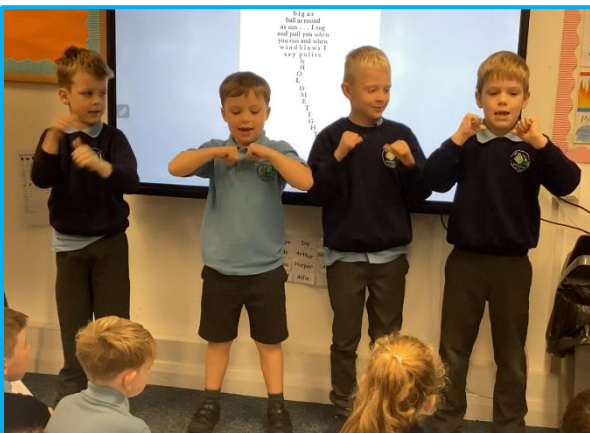
In class at the end of the day, we are thoroughly enjoying *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl. The children love following the adventure in this longer story and are learning lots of new vocabulary along the way, expanding their language skills while nurturing a love of reading.

Thank you for supporting your children by reading regularly at home and practising tricky words together. Every bit of shared reading makes a big difference.

We look forward to sharing our **Remembrance Service with you on Tuesday at 11am** in front of the war memorial in the village and our **Celebration Assembly on Friday at 3pm**.

Mrs. Ward, Miss Webb and Miss Ellis

Birch Class – Year 2



This week in English, Year 2 have been exploring a wonderful variety of poetry! We’ve read rhyming poems, shape poems, list poems and question poems, using each style as inspiration for our own creative writing. The children have enjoyed experimenting with rhythm, rhyme and layout, and have shown great imagination in crafting poems about their favourite topics.

Alongside our poetry work, we continue to build our reading skills through our guided reading sessions, which take place three times a week. During these sessions, we read together in small groups, focusing on a shared text. We begin by revising tricky words and exploring new vocabulary to ensure we understand the meaning

of key words in context. Each session has a specific focus:

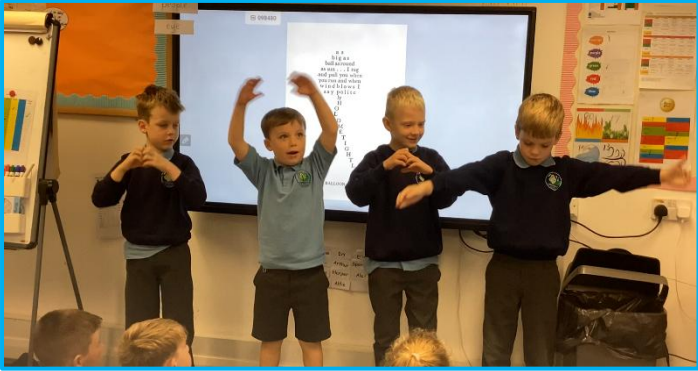
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Session 1 – Decoding: sounding out and reading words accurately.

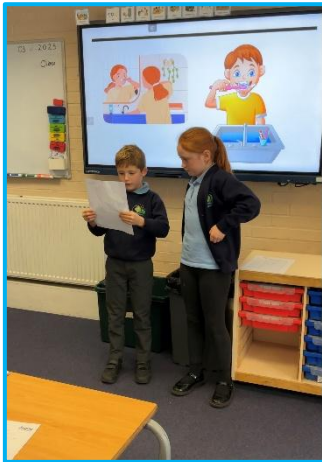
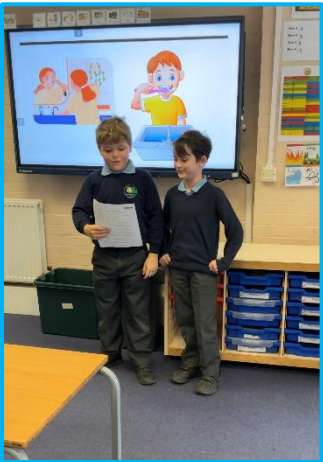
Session 2 – Prosody: reading with fluency, expression and understanding.

Session 3 – Comprehension: discussing what we've read and answering questions about the text.



Mrs Finch and Mrs Buckmaster

Oak Class – Year 3 & 4



In Guided Reading, we've read a mixture of fiction and non-fiction texts. We've loved sharing stories together - especially exciting ones about skateboarders from Mars! Our non-fiction reading has also been fascinating; some groups particularly enjoyed learning about the amazing human towers from Spain.

We've also been historians this year, reading real historical sources to find out what life was like for children in the past. We explored factory reports and evacuee letters to discover how different childhood used to be.

Oak Class have worked hard to become thoughtful, curious readers who enjoy discovering something new every time we open a book!

Mr Armes, Miss Wentworth, Ms Moretto and Mrs Crowe

These sessions help children develop confidence, fluency and a deeper love of reading.

At the end of each day, we enjoy sharing our current class story, *The Boy Who Grew Dragons* by Andy Shepherd. The children are captivated by Tomas's big secret — his very own dragon, Flicker, who grew on a mysterious tree in his grandad's garden! It's a fantastic story full of adventure, humour and imagination — the perfect way to end our school day.

This year, Oak Class have enjoyed exploring a wide range of books and texts in our reading lessons. In English, we've read some fantastic stories including *Arthur and the Golden Rope*, *The King Who Banned the Dark*, and a poem about a small dragon. These books inspired our writing and helped us develop our ideas for our own creative work.

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🌐 Online Safety Tip of the Week – Week 4

What Are Children Really Watching on YouTube and TikTok?

Even with child-friendly settings, not all content is appropriate. Algorithms can sometimes show videos with language, behaviour, or messages that aren't suitable for young viewers.

Top Tip:

Watch together now and then — you'll quickly get a feel for the type of content they're seeing. You can also enable **YouTube Kids** or **Restricted Mode** on YouTube and TikTok.

Common Sense Media also reviews popular videos and influencers:

www.commonsensemedia.org

Let's stay curious and connected.

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

Christmas Designs

Thank you to everyone that ordered through ClassFundraising. We have raised an amazing £287!!!

Calendar Dates coming up

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

November 2025	
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 Willow Class Celebration Assembly
	Bonkers Bottomless Bingo – PTA event
Wednesday 19th	Road Safety Day Class Activities
	Every1in! Willow Class
	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	

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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



PTA Events coming up next

BONKERS BOTTOMLESS

B I N G O

GET READY

For an unforgettable evening filled with Fun, Games, Laughter and Fantastic Prizes!

Horstead Village Hall
Great Horstead
SG9 0NR

FRIDAY 14th NOV 7.30PM TO 10.30PM

£30 A TICKET

<http://www.trybooking.com/uk/FKDM>

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