



# 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: 7 25/26

Dear Families,

Well... Christmas has well and truly arrived in Hormead, and I think it's fair to say the staff are hanging on by a thread! The dreaded elves have made their annual appearance, and Jingle and Belle have been causing absolute mayhem. We've had to battle through reams of toilet paper just to get into the loos, and duck for cover as the cheeky pair zip-wire through the corridors like they own the place.

The children, of course, *love* it. Every morning, they come charging in, desperate to track down Jingle and Belle and swap stories about what mischief their house elves have been up to. Combine that with the early-morning sugar boost of advent-calendar chocolate and it's no wonder routine has become a very loose concept this week! While staff are on their knees trying to squeeze every last bit of curriculum around rehearsals and Christmas crafts, the children are buzzing with excitement and honestly, it's hard not to get caught up in their joy. It's crazy what a tiny elf and a square of chocolate can do to a school!



The highlight of the week, without a doubt, has been our incredible Nativity performance. I'm not exaggerating when I say it's the best one, I have ever seen. I still can't quite believe how confident, loud and completely brilliant the children were in their performance of *'Follow the Star'*. Quite how Miss Sawyer managed to produce all of that in just two weeks will remain one of life's mysteries, but I think everyone who came along would agree it was nothing short of wonderful. We certainly have some budding young actors among us! The children brought smiles to all our faces and reminded us so beautifully of the true meaning of Christmas. A huge well-done to all our Nursery and Reception stars.

As one performance ends, Year 1 and 2 are gearing up for their turn, busily practising their songs for next week's Festive Festival. I am crossing *everything* for good weather, as there is nothing quite like an outdoor performance to kick off Christmas in style. I hope many of you will be able to join us, share a glass of mulled wine, enjoy a mince pie, and celebrate the start of the festive season together.

This time of year, also marks the beginning of our much-anticipated Christmas story writing across the school. Every child is hoping their story will be the one chosen to win the Christmas Story Writing Cup. This year, our writing inspiration came from a very mischievous little cat who accidentally spoiled Christmas, much to the children's delight! I cannot wait to curl up with their stories this weekend. Choosing the winners is going to be incredibly difficult, I already know that. Winners will be announced at the Christingle service on the last day of term.

And finally, tonight is the Christmas Disco! The children are bursting with excitement, and I'm sure we're in for lots of dancing, laughter and festive fun.

This week's class news theme is all about art and D&T, a firm favourite in our school.

Wishing you all a wonderful weekend.

**Mrs Cowler,**  
**Headteacher**



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## Reasons to Celebrate

### Class Stars of the Week



You make us so proud!

Hedgehogs	Poppy Flanagan	For showing courage during our Nativity
Hedgehogs	All the Hedgehogs	For being so amazing in the Nativity performance
Cherry	Poppy Fannon-Hall	For always setting a good example in our Nativity
Cherry	Everyone in Cherry	For all the hard work they put into three amazing Nativity performances
Willow Y1	Leo Darmondy	His amazing independent Christmas writing
Willow Y1	Oscar Cockerton	For great progress in his phonics learning and his amazing effort in maths and writing
Birch Y2	Matilda Doherty-Huggins	Her excellent enthusiasm in Festive Festival practice.
Birch Y2	Maggie	Showing aspiration with her writing this week
Oak Y3	Eva Austin	Showing aspiration across the whole curriculum
Oak Y3	Cruz Cartwright	For always being noticeably polite around the school
Oak Y4	Hattie Foster	For always being helpful around the class
Oak Y4	Esmee Paine	For doing so well in assessments this week

### Values Hearts



Love	Roman, Nazar, Jesse	For supporting their friend when he was feeling poorly
Cooperation	Eva Crippen	For joining in with learning confidently and answering questions
Honesty	Aubrey Buzzing	For telling her teacher when she accidentally got pen on the carpet.
Honesty	George Apostolos	For being honest when he created a spillage in the bathroom sink and helped to clean it up.
Courage	Cherry & Hedgehogs	For performing in front of an audience
Kindness	Leo, Daphne, Adeline, Louie and Arthur	For always tidying tables and tuck in chairs without being asked
Kindness	Poppy Fannon Hall	For helping Miss Sawyer when she drops things
Resilience	Elliot Villar	For not giving up in English even though he found it really hard.
Resilience	Luca & Adeline	For recognising that mistakes are good because you learn from them
Aspiration	Hedgehogs	For their amazing performance in the Nativity
Aspiration	Nazar Kozub	For challenging himself to write two full sentences in literacy
Aspiration	Archie, Travis & Thomas	For approaching every new challenge in their learning with determination and a smiley, positive attitude.
Aspiration	Ernie Mulberry-Laurie	For working hard in English
Aspiration	George Berger	For trying hard in English today and beautifully writing up his story

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## HOUSE POINT AWARD

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



**BRONZE AWARD:**

**SILVER AWARD:** Lenny Doust, George Berger, Ernie Mulberry-Laurie

**GOLD AWARD:** Mason Larman

## Getting to know our School Governors

Jill Heraud



Hello, my name is Jill Heraud, I am a new governor at the school. Before I retired my working life was in education, part of that time was here at Hornead with the 'Early Years', I am excited to be back as part of the school community and enjoy coming in to listen to the children read.

I am passionate about education, committed to supporting the head teacher and working with the governing board to uphold the values and vision of the school to help achieve its goals

## Fun in Forest School



There has been plenty of creativity in Forest School this term! The children have loved designing and building their own tree houses and cosy dens. Even Hattie Hedgehog enjoyed sitting in her willow branch teepee last week.

The children have been busy using clay to create a symbol of their Forest School name. It has been a great process involving perseverance, imagination and courage as they worked out in the sunshine and manipulated clay into something others would recognise. They overcame hurdles along the way and were delighted to have reached a finished product.



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Many of the older children have also created little habitats and homes for woodland creatures: the 5 Star Bug Hotel is being added to weekly. We've been excited to see a photo on the wildlife camera of a real mouse in the 'mouse house' and a squirrel. With Christmas on the way, we've also been busy making sustainable, festive crafts from natural materials. It's been a brilliant mix of creativity, teamwork and outdoor adventures!

*Ivy Eileen*

## Hoglets Preschool – 2-3 year olds

What a wonderful couple of weeks we've had at Hoglets! The children have been busy exploring, creating, learning and most importantly having fun as we've enjoyed our themes of Birthdays and Hanukkah.

Over the past fortnight, the children have loved getting involved in a variety of exciting activities. Our mark-making station has been especially popular, with colourful sand helping the children to practise different patterns and develop their early writing skills. We also had a fantastic counting activity, where the children carefully counted out candles and placed them onto cakes, wonderful for early number recognition and fine motor skills.



Our potion-making area has been a big hit too! The children experimented with coloured bottles and pipettes to create their own magical mixtures. During this time, we also introduced the story and meaning of Hanukkah – the Festival of Lights, helping the children learn about different traditions and celebrations in a fun, hands-on way.

Hoglets has also been getting into the festive spirit. The children have really enjoyed decorating our Christmas tree, exploring different Christmas outfits, and decorating our room. Outdoors, the changing weather has offered its own excitement—there's been plenty of fun splashing in puddles and exploring the ice that formed in the garden overnight!

Looking ahead, we will be diving even further into our Christmas topic, with lots more craft and festive activities planned over the coming weeks.

As always, we continue to play and learn outside in all weathers, so please ensure your child comes prepared with warm, weather-appropriate clothing, as well as spare clothes in their bag in case they get wet or muddy.



*Mrs Eves, Mrs Plumb and Mrs Villar*

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## Hedgehogs Nursery – 3-4 year olds

Wow! What a wonderfully busy two weeks we have had in Hedgehogs. The children have been working so hard practicing their nativity songs and dance moves. We hope you all agree that they performed brilliantly, we are so proud of every single one of them. It takes a lot of courage to stand up in front of so many people, and they did it with such confidence and joy.

We have been getting into the festive spirit with lots of Christmassy artwork. They will take their folder home soon for you to see. The children also had great fun exploring ice. They each chose an item to freeze, poured water over it, and placed it in the freezer. They were amazed to see their objects completely frozen the next day!



In phonics, we have been learning the sound “P”, and the children have enjoyed singing the song 'Pat a cake' linked to the sound. In Mini Mozarts, the story was *Frosty the Snowman*, and the children even shared a few of their nativity songs with the music teachers.



In maths, we have been exploring different shapes and putting them into groups. In Forest School the children have been busy discovering the wintry woodland and beginning to create their Forest School decorations.

Next week, our theme will be **‘The Nativity’**. The children will explore a range of activities linked to the story and will be retelling it through their play.

We hope you have a lovely weekend, and we look forward to another exciting week ahead!

**Mrs Larman, Mrs Stuart, Miss V Jackson**

## Maple Class – SEND Room

It’s been a fun-filled and very busy couple of weeks here in Maple Class. The children have thrown themselves into all our activities with enthusiasm, especially in Art, where we’ve been diving into the wonderful world of colours. Each week we focus on a different colour and explore it from lots of different angles — through sensory play, painting and sorting. The children have absolutely loved getting hands-on and discovering all the exciting activities linked to each colour.



Alongside this, we’ve also been practising the Makaton signs for each colour. It’s been lovely to see the children joining in so confidently, signing along with staff and supporting each other as they learn. Their communication skills are really shining through, and we’re so proud of how engaged they’ve been.



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This week we've kicked off something very exciting — making our Christmas decorations! The classroom has officially become a festive workshop. The children showed fantastic independence as they chose materials, followed steps, and created their own sparkling masterpieces. Let's just say there was glitter everywhere, and the room has never looked so shiny! It was a wonderfully joyful (and extremely sparkly!) experience for everyone involved.

As we head into the next couple of weeks, we're really looking forward to seeing what new activities, celebrations, and learning opportunities come our way. If the last fortnight is anything to go by, Maple Class is in for a brilliant and busy run-up to the holidays!

**Miss Lynch, Mrs Wade and Mrs Dunn**

## Cherry Class – Reception

Firstly, I would like to say a massive well done to all the children in Cherry class and Hedgehogs for their hard work and brilliant performance in our nativity play! They did all of us proud, singing and dancing beautifully and delivering their lines clearly and loudly. Thank you to everyone at home who supported us in learning them!



As many of our parents will know, an empty cardboard box does not remain a cardboard box for very long in Cherry class. The children LOVE to get crafty and come up with lots of wonderful creations using anything they can get their hands on - we've seen toys for cats, houses for snails, helmets for robots, and telescopes to name but a few. Children have the opportunity during their child-initiated play to try a range of joining techniques and are encouraged to try to make different things, exploring how materials and tools work and solving problems as they arise.

Every morning during 'busy fingers' the children develop their fine motor skills. They each practice using writing tools with control and carefully cutting with scissors - important skills as budding artists! The children also explore a range of painting and drawing techniques to create their own artworks. This term we have printed fireworks and patterns, made tracks with car tyres, explored colour mixing with paints, made rubbings with wax crayons, and have drawn almost everything you can imagine.

Recently in Cherry class, we have been learning about boats and how they work. We investigated which materials are waterproof and which things sink



or float, testing a range of objects. The children were then challenged to use their knowledge of materials and boats to design their own boats to float on water - these should last for a while in the water, so we needed to make them waterproof too. They were all very focussed on their task and we saw lots of creativity! We then tested our boats on the water and thought about what was good about them, and what could make them even better.



**Miss Sawyer and Mrs Griffin**

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## Willow Class – Year 1

Art and Design Technology continue to be highlights of the week for Willow Class, giving everyone a wonderful opportunity to get creative, explore new skills, and occasionally make a little bit of mess! During the first half of the term, our Art unit focused on primary colours: what they are, how they work and how they can be mixed to create secondary colours. The children studied the vibrant work of artist Jasper Johns and produced their own pieces inspired by his style, showcasing an exciting mix of primary and secondary colours.

We also experimented with shades, investigating how adding black or white can completely transform the hue of a colour. The children were fascinated to see how many variations could be made from a single starting colour.

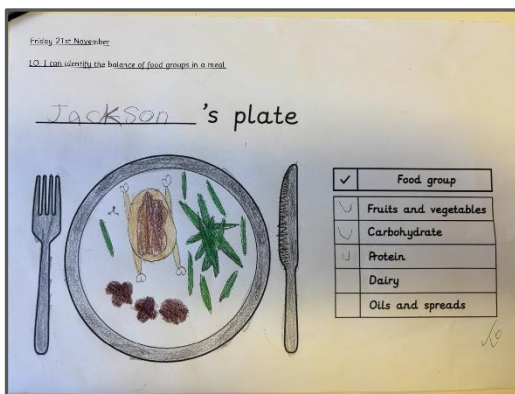


In DT, we have had great fun developing our cutting and juicing skills. The class learned how to use knives safely by keeping fingers clear of the sharp edge and using a fork to keep fruit steady. Everyone particularly enjoyed testing different fruit combinations to design their own delicious smoothies. While a few results were more surprising than expected, these moments made excellent learning opportunities as we discussed quantities, flavours and how to refine our recipes next time. Our festive Christmas crafts have also allowed the children to refine key skills such as cutting, sticking, mixing, rolling and improving fine motor control.

We are excited to begin our next Art unit Exploring Line and Shape where we will investigate different types of lines, pressure techniques and the work of artist Brianna McCarthy.

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

## Birch Class – Year 2



This half term in Design and Technology, we've been learning all about Cooking and Nutrition: Balanced Diet. The children have been finding out why it's important to eat a range of different foods, and they're working towards making their own tasty, balanced wraps.

We started the topic by looking at the different food groups and sorting lots of familiar foods into each one. The children then drew one of their favourite meals and had to spot which food groups were included — and whether their meal was truly balanced or missing something important! A popular choice was pizza but we found this included carbohydrates, vegetables and dairy.

Over the next week, we'll be practising lots of food prep skills such as cutting, grating, snipping and spreading. The children will also be taste-testing a variety of ingredients to help them decide what works well in a wrap. Using what they've learned, they'll design their own wraps with a good balance of ingredients before making (and eating!) them.

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Finally, they'll get to evaluate their creations and think about what went well and what they might change next time. It's going to be delicious!

**Mrs Finch and Mrs Buckmaster**

## *Oak Class – Year 3 & 4*



Oak Class have had a wonderfully creative half term in Art! We've been exploring tone, texture and proportion, beginning with pencil work to create three-dimensional effects. The children learned how using contrasting light and dark tones can make objects look textured and lifelike.

We also spent time developing our understanding of proportion, comparing the sizes of different objects and thinking carefully about how to place each element on the page. It was brilliant to see the children becoming more confident in using space thoughtfully and drawing objects in accurate relation to one another.

A favourite part of the term was discovering the vibrant, hyper-real artwork of Sarah Graham. The children were fascinated by her glossy colours and striking details, and they enjoyed trying out some of her techniques to make everyday objects look bold and eye-catching.

We rounded off our work by exploring texture through collage, layering different papers and materials to create surfaces that looked almost touchable. The class showed great imagination and really took pride in their finished pieces.

It's been a fantastic half term of artistic exploration, and Oak Class should feel very proud of everything they've achieved!



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

### **Online Safety Tip of the Week – Week 6**

#### **Online Gaming – Fun but Know the Risks**

Many online games have chat functions, in-game purchases, and content not suitable for younger players — even in popular titles like Roblox, Fortnite, or Minecraft.

#### **Top Tip:**

Take time to explore the **parent settings** in your child's favourite game. Most platforms allow you to control who they can talk to, set spending limits, and even block certain content.

A great place to start is the **Parents' Guide to Gaming** at: [www.internetmatters.org](http://www.internetmatters.org)

It's not about banning — it's about guiding.

**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)

Please note that Elaine now finishes at 1pm so if you need to come to the office, it may be quicker to come in the morning – thank you.

### Morning Club

Please add your child on to Morning Club in advance (where possible). You also need to pay at the time of booking. This helps us to ensure we are in ratio.

### Polite Notice

As this is a very busy time of year, please keep a regular eye on Ping as we won't always have the time to chase individual parents and so your child may miss out on something.

### Arbor Payments

Please could you ensure all your child's Arbor accounts are paid and up straight before the end of term. Thank you.

## Super Star Sports – Spring Term 2026

Parents can view and book their child's place via the links below:

**Monday Gymnastics Club (Rec - Yr 4):** <https://pbbl.uk/4pomI4u>

**Tuesday Ninja Warrior Club (Rec - Yr 4):** <https://pbbl.uk/3KtygEk>

**Wednesday Football Club (Rec - Yr 4):** <https://pbbl.uk/4pfu7D3>

**Thursday Lego Club (Rec - Yr 4):** <https://pbbl.uk/4rKe6XA>

**Friday Multi-Sports Club (Rec - Yr 4):** <https://pbbl.uk/3YaDpUU>

## Calendar Dates coming up

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

December 2025	
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

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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

**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>