



# 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: 10 25/26

### Dear Families,

It has been wonderful to see and hear all the amazing learning taking place across the school as the children settle so confidently into the winter term. I must admit that we have had some very gloomy days of late, where adults (including me!) have found it a little harder to find our mojo. Thankfully, the children never let us dwell there for long. Their enthusiasm and sheer love of learning drive each day forward and remind us why what we do matters so much.



This was brought home to me particularly during a visit to Hedgehogs Nursery this week, where I happened to interrupt a discussion about... photosynthesis! Yes – photosynthesis - in a class of three- and four-year-olds. It was yet another reminder of how incredibly fortunate our children are to have staff who are so enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and committed to never capping learning.

That morning, the children were engaged in a hands-on learning experience focused on how plants grow. Each child planted their own spider plant, carefully filling pots with soil and positioning their plant with great care. They were introduced to the concept of photosynthesis and, through discussion and practical demonstration, showed a clear understanding that plants need sunlight to grow.

To bring this learning to life, the children then took part in imaginative play, pretending to be seeds themselves. When a "sun" was placed above them, they slowly grew taller, explaining that the sun gives plants energy and sugars to help them grow. This was a wonderful example of how young children can make meaningful links between scientific concepts and real-life experiences. They even reinforced their learning further by clapping out the syllables in the word pho-to-syn-the-sis, supporting early phonological awareness. Truly impressive!

This experience felt particularly timely, as I had just come out of some OFSTED training where the importance of strong foundation knowledge was a key focus - knowledge that children can build upon as they move through their education. I could not have seen a more perfect example of this in action.

As a result, this term I will be looking more deeply across all subjects, reflecting on what we do well and exploring how we can make it even better. Our aim is always to give the children at Hormead School the very best possible education and a secure foundation to build upon as they leave us in Year 4.



I hope you have had a chance to read the letters about our 180th school birthday fundraising. Please do help us spread the word to raise money for our school. Our staff have suggested a wonderfully exciting idea: a **"Back in Time to 1846"** day! We have pencilled in Thursday 30th April as a Victorian dressing-up day - so I wanted to give you plenty of notice to start planning those outfits.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

*Lynda Cowler*, Headteacher

**Love of Learning, Love of Life itself and Love of God**



## Reasons to Celebrate

### Class Stars of the Week



You make us so proud!

Hedgehogs	Flo Eastwood	For always showing our school values
Hedgehogs	Henry Barlow	For showing courage & confidence with speaking to adults and friends
Cherry	Theo Foskett	For outstanding effort in all his learning
Cherry	Charlie Munday	For great effort in his writing
Willow Y1	Travis McCulloch	Always trying hard, especially in handwriting!
Willow Y1	Poppy Green	For good recognition and comparison of numbers to 20
Birch Y2	Arthur Rodgers	Trying so hard in maths
Birch Y2	Evie Parry	For sharing her brilliant ideas with the class
Oak Y3	Freddie Bray	Being a kind and helpful friend
Oak Y3	Mia Santoli	For showing resilience and trying really hard in maths
Oak Y4	Archie Newman	Always being polite and showing kindness around school
Oak Y4	Sunny McNeill	For being creative and writing a fantastic recount in English

### Values Hearts



Cooperation	Lenny Berger	For helping at tidy up time
Cooperation	George Berger	For helping Albie with his 'now and next' board
Courage	Jacob Stanning & Raphael Frearson	Showing courage and settling into Hedgehogs so well!
Honesty	Poppy Fannon-Hall	For telling the truth to adults
Resilience	Sienna Haylock	For working so hard on new sounds in phonics
Resilience	Poppy, Daphne, Emilia, Albie M, Louie	For never giving up and learning from their mistakes
Aspiration	Aubrey-Mae Piper	For creating an amazing writing book
Aspiration	Tommy Sandford	For working hard in maths
Aspiration	Luca, Thomas, Archie, Amelia, Aubrey, Leo, Oscar, Harry, Adeline	For always trying their hardest in their learning
Aspiration	Hermione Hagley	For her amazing handwriting
Aspiration	Lucy Parkyn	For trying so hard when writing a sentence
Aspiration	Mia Santoli	For trying hard in French with matching the months to English

Love of Learning, Love of Life itself and Love of God



Congratulations for completing and moving on to the next House point award:

**BRONZE AWARD:** Matilda Risley, Nazar Kozub, Thomas Stanning

**SILVER AWARD:** Tommy Sandford, Alyssia Tache

**GOLD AWARD:**



Congratulations to:

- ❖ Sienna Sandford
- ❖ Mason Larman
- ❖ Leo Read
- ❖ Winnie Richardson

For earning a pen licence

### Job Opportunity – Lunchtime Support

Our much-loved Mrs Prior is finding lunchtime duty a little difficult due to her health conditions. From Monday, she will be supporting our Breakfast Club only, ahead of her retirement later this year.

We are therefore looking for someone to help manage lunchtimes in the hall from **11:30am to 1:30pm**. Duties will include:

- Setting up and putting away tables
- Sweeping floors and cleaning tables after meals
- Supervising children's lunches alongside other staff on duty

Please contact the school office if you are interested — **even if you are only able to help for one or two days**. 01763 289201



## Class News

### Forest School

Rain, mud and cold have brought plenty of challenges to the forest this week, but they haven't stopped us enjoying our time outside. We've kept warm with energetic Forest School games that get us moving and thinking about nature. "Sparrowhawks and Sparrows" has been a favourite, along with our North-South-East-West game. Playing Bird Bingo has been good fun too and highlighted how many different kinds of birds exist.

With the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch coming up this month, we've been learning about birds and making our own feeders to encourage more visitors to Hormead. Hedgehogs even became birds themselves, using socks as beaks to hunt for orange wool "worms". Some groups made cheerio feeders, while others filled half oranges with lard and seed. We hope the local birds enjoy these homemade treats.

We'd love for you to join in by spotting birds in your garden this weekend and supporting the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch.



*Ivy Eileen*





## Hoglets Class – age 2 and 3 years

Hoglets have had a fantastic start to the half term as we look into our “Under the Sea” theme. Over the last three weeks, the children have been exploring sea animals, pirate treasure, and mermaids, and their curiosity has been flowing. The children have loved discovering which animals live beneath the waves, using our sensory trays to bring the theme to life. Our pirate treasure beach scene has sparked imaginative play, while the mermaid filling-and-pouring tray has helped the children develop both their fine and gross motor skills through



scooping,  
pouring,

and experimenting with different materials. We’ve also been busy with creative activities. The children enjoyed crafting their own treasure chests, decorating them with shiny jewels, and making treasure maps. We even stained the maps with tea bags to give them an old, weathered look before drawing our own routes to “X marks the spot!” Dressing up as pirates has been a real highlight this week. The children have thrown themselves into character and let their imaginations run wild with their friends.

We have also started having Emma come in to do a singing session on a Thursday afternoon, which the children are really enjoying. It’s so nice to see their confidence building each week as they feel more comfortable and we can’t wait to see how far they will come over the next few weeks.

*Mrs Eves, Mrs Plumb, Mrs Moretta*

## Hedgehogs Class – age 3 and 4 years



This week in Hedgehogs has been full of curiosity, creativity, and hands-on learning. In Forest School, the children became brilliant bird-spotters, keeping their eyes peeled for any feathered friends. They also made their own bird feeders using pipe cleaners and Cheerios, crafted sock puppet birds, and used orange wool as “worms” for imaginative play. Using leaves and twigs, they carefully built their own bird nests, showing fantastic teamwork and problem-solving.

In RE, we explored Lunar New Year and learned why the colour red is considered lucky. The children enjoyed discovering new traditions and celebrations from around the world.

Our weekly theme, Dinosaur Adventure, has been a huge hit. The dinosaur tuff tray has sparked lots of excitement, storytelling, and roaring fun. In maths, we focused on shape recognition, with the children matching shapes to the correct pictures and growing in confidence each day.

**Love of Learning, Love of Life itself and Love of God**



Phonics has centred around the sound “o”, and the children have enjoyed practising it through games and activities. Our song of the week has been Miss Polly Had a Dolly, which they have loved singing together.

PE has been full of energy as we moved and sang along to Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes. When the music stopped, the children had to quickly touch the body part called out, which brought lots of laughter.

In music, the children were introduced to a new instrument called a “toot” and joined in beautifully with songs and dance. During adult-led time, they began creating their own non-fiction books, learning how to handle books carefully, turn pages, and understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction.



It’s been a wonderful week of learning and discovery.

*Mrs Stuart, Mrs Larman, Miss Jackson*

## Maple Class – SEND



The children in Maple class have returned after the break full of enthusiasm, eager to learn and wearing big, smiley faces every day. It has been lovely to see them settle back into routines so confidently and happily.

This half term in Art, we have been busy exploring paint in lots of exciting ways. Instead of just using brushes, the children have experimented with different tools such as cars and sponges. They have loved discovering the different marks, patterns and textures each tool can make, and there has been lots of curiosity and creativity

along the way.

In Music, we have been singing a range of familiar nursery rhymes while using our giant Elastablast. The children are given a choice of which song they would like to sing by selecting from two symbols, and they really enjoy making their own choices. They

also love listening, joining in with actions, sounds and singing where they can.

We are so proud of the fantastic start Maple class has made and are really looking forward to seeing what the next few weeks bring!

*Mrs Lynch, Mrs Dunn and Mrs Wade*



**Love of Learning, Love of Life itself and Love of God**



## Cherry Class – Reception



We have had a busy start to the term in Cherry Class as we have begun our new topic of 'Animal Kingdom' - so far, we have looked at British Wildlife, our pets and this week we have focused on Arctic animals where the children have loved creating their own penguins and creating fruity 'icebergs' to try. Next week, we will move on to looking at the rainforest / jungle and finding out about all the animals who live there using the book 'Monkey Puzzle' to help us.

In phonics, we have started our phase 3 sounds and the children have been working hard to implement these in their reading and writing, including some trigraphs too (igh and ear), as well as some tricky words which we read on sight such as you, was and

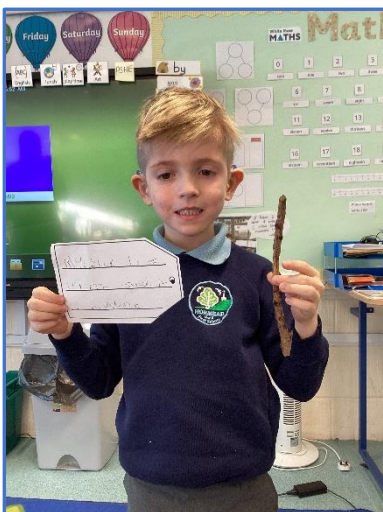
my. We have also introduced a new writing area in our classroom to give the children lots of opportunities in their child-initiated play for all their lovely creative writing ideas! In our literacy sessions, we have been working on our current book project where the children have been creating information books about 'Things I Like'. The children have had some lovely ideas and have enjoyed sharing all the things they like, from fossils, to macaroni cheese, to pies and monster trucks! It will be lovely to share these books with you at our upcoming parents evening so you can see how hard they have worked too! Our next book project starting next week will focus on animal stories where the children will have the opportunity to create their own adventures for an animal of their choice.

*Mrs Guillian, Miss Griffin and Mrs Villar*

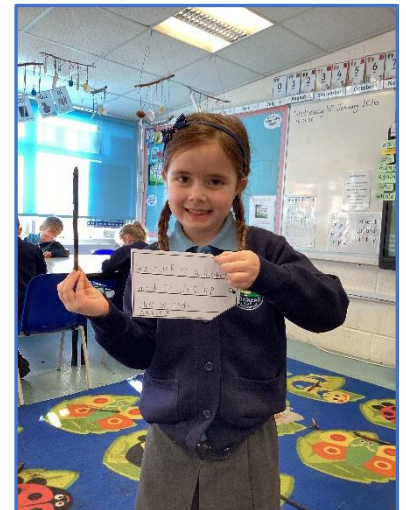
## Willow Class – Year 1

Since returning from the holidays, Willow class have been busy developing their narrative writing skills, with a particular focus on writing to entertain. The children have explored who might read their stories and how they want their audience to feel, helping them to write with a clear purpose.

We have thoroughly enjoyed Stanley's Stick by John Hegley and Neal Layton, using our imaginations to transform an ordinary stick into a range of exciting objects. The children have been learning how to use the conjunction and to join words and ideas in a sentence and have had lots of fun experimenting with describing words to add detail for the reader.



After writing our own versions of the story, we shared them with Hedgehogs, becoming proud authors.



This week, we have begun exploring Ruby's Worry by Tom Percival. The children are learning about worries, creating their own worry monsters and discussing what to do if they have a worry. This learning will support them in writing their own stories and helpful guides for others.

**Love of Learning, Love of Life itself and Love of God**



In phonics, the children are continuing to learn Phase 5 sounds and are becoming increasingly confident at recognising them. Reading practice sessions remain a highlight of the week, with small group reading, decoding, blending, expression and comprehension work. The children are working incredibly hard, and their improvement in handwriting this term so far has been fantastic.

Keep up the brilliant work, Willow class!

*Mrs Ward, Miss Ellis and Miss Haywood*

## Birch Class – Year 2



In Birch class we have been exploring traditional tales, beginning with a classic version of 'Rapunzel'. To deepen their understanding, the children retold the story through performances to the class. Their confidence and teamwork were fantastic to see, as well as their knowledge of the plot.

We then compared the traditional story to Bethan Woolvin's alternative narrative and rebellious Rapunzel, noticing how the familiar story and characters were different. We took our learning beyond the page by acting out exploring the forest around the tower, imagining we were Rapunzel free for the first time. This helped the children generate descriptive sentences

and experiment with a wide range of verbs to bring their writing to life.

Building on this, we developed our use of conjunctions to join and expand on ideas. We have also been learning about and using different types of sentences (exclamations, questions, statements, and commands) and working to ensure we use the correct punctuation for each, as well as beginning to use commas for lists.

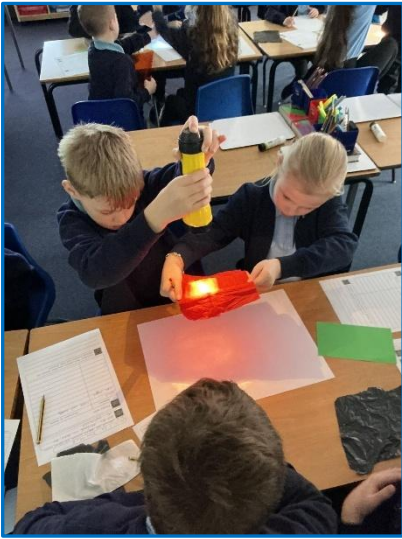


The children have now created plans for their own versions of the story, thinking carefully about exciting settings and unusual characters that will make their stories unique. I am very much looking forward to reading the amazing tales they will produce over the next few lessons - Taylor Swift has got to find a way to escape a castle!

*Miss Sawyer and Mrs Buckmaster*



## Oak Class – Year 3 & 4



Oak Class have had an exciting few weeks in English, diving deep into the world of unexplained events and curious creatures. We started by exploring the book *Real Life Mysteries*, with a special focus on the legend of Bigfoot. The children threw themselves into hot seating, taking on the roles of eyewitnesses and investigators to create their own quotes and imagine what it would be like to come face-to-face with such a mysterious figure. They then used these ideas to write detailed recounts, bringing their imagined encounters to life.

Once Bigfoot had sparked their curiosity, we broadened our investigation to other strange phenomena. UFO sightings, mysterious circles, monsters of the deep like the Kraken, and even theories about ancient aliens all made an appearance in our classroom discussions. The children were fascinated, and these mysteries inspired them to invent their very own “Real Life Mystery”.

Using the key questions, who, what, when, where and why, the class created a brilliant range of spooky and intriguing scenarios. We now have suspicious sailors, horrifying hospitals, eerie forests and plenty of frightening footprints appearing in their work. Their imaginations have been working overtime.

We are currently turning these ideas into informative recounts, focusing on structure, clarity and detail. The children will continue developing these next week. After that, we’ll be shifting gears and moving on to persuasive writing, where the class will create leaflets encouraging people to visit interesting and exciting places.

Oak Class have shown fantastic creativity and enthusiasm — it’s been a joy to see

*Mr Armes, Miss Wentworth, Mrs Crowe and Miss Standing*



### 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)

#### Parent Consultations

Please ensure that you have booked a slot on the Ping form. If you have any problems, please give the office a call. **Love of Learning, Love of Life itself and Love of God**

Thank you



## Calendar Dates coming up

Changes or additions to the calendar dates are marked in red

<b>February 2026</b>	
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup>	9:30am Cherry Class Celebration Assembly
Friday 6 <sup>th</sup>	Newsletter 11
Monday 9 <sup>th</sup>	Parent Consultations (Y4 only) – 2pm start in classroom
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	Parent Consultations (Y1 to Y3) – 3pm start in hall
Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup>	Safer Internet Day
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup>	Parent Consultations (Nursery & Reception) – 1:30pm start in hall
Friday 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Non-Uniform Day / Cake Sale after school</b>
Friday 13 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Valentines Disco (during school day) – Bring £1 donation</b>
<b>16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>HALF TERM WEEK</b>
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	Y1 Willow Class Celebration Assembly (9:30am)
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup>	Newsletter 12
<b>March 2026</b>	
Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Y3/4 Dance Festival (5pm) team tbc
Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Oak Class Rapid Fire Cricket – Sele School
Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup>	Y2 Birch Class Celebration Assembly (9:30am)
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup>	World Book Day – Dress up as a book character.
Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup>	2:45pm – Parents stay and read
Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup>	Y3 Oak Celebration Assembly (9:30am)
Friday 13 <sup>th</sup>	Newsletter 13
Sunday 15 <sup>th</sup>	Mother's Day
<b>Monday 16<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Walk and Wheel to school 2-week Challenge begins</b>
Monday 16 <sup>th</sup>	Y3/4 Bikeability training - Day 1
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Y3/4 Bikeability training - Day 2
<b>Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Year 2 Tag Rugby Festival – St Edmunds</b>
Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup>	Y4 Oak Celebration Assembly (9:30am)
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup>	Eid
Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup>	PTA Colour Run – details to follow
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup>	Newsletter 14
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>10am Easter Service at St Nicholas Church led by Cherry Class</b>
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup>	School ends at 1pm for Easter Holidays
<b>April 2026</b>	
<b>Monday 13<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Back to school</b>



## After School Clubs and Wraparound

Please see below the clubs we are offering for the Spring term

### Breakfast Club – Every day

Time	Location	Year group	Lead Staff	Cost
7:45 to 8:45am	School Hall	Reception to Y4	Mrs Prior	£2
7:45 to 8:45am	School Hall	Nursery & Preschool	Nursery Staff Rota	£4

Included in the cost, children can choose a variety of foods for breakfast including toast, cereals, croissants and fruit.

Bookings can be made via Arbor

### Come and Play in Hedgehogs Club – Every Day

Time	Location	Year group	Cost
2:45pm to 3:15pm	Hedgehogs Nursery	Hoglets & Hedgehogs	Free of charge
3:15pm to 4:15pm	Hedgehogs Nursery	Hoglets, Hedgehogs Reception, Year 1 & Year 2	2-3 years - £9 per hour 3-4 years - £6.50 per hour School age - £5.50 per hour
3:15pm to 5:15pm (2 hours)	Hedgehogs Nursery	Hoglets, Hedgehogs Reception, Year 1 & Year 2	

- For Hedgehogs wraparound club there is a ratio of one adult to 5 children
- Children in Reception to Year 2 not wanting to attend Superstar Sports can attend Hedgehogs club at £5:50 per hour
- All bookings must be made via the Arbor app and paid for **in advance before 3.00pm** on the day of the activity.

### Super Star Sport Club

Clubs and late clubs should be booked directly through Super Star Sport:

Activity – 3:15-4:15pm in school hall - £5.50 per session

Late Provision – 4:15-5:30pm in school hall - £11 which includes the Club session and a light snack

Monday Gymnastics Club (Rec - Yr 4): <https://pbbl.uk/4poml4u>

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>

If you have any queries, or are having trouble booking on Arbor, please speak to Mrs Tompkins in the office.

**Love of Learning, Love of Life itself and Love of God**



## Raise funds for us for **FREE**

with  easyfundraising



Join as our supporter today at:  
[www.easyfundraising.org.uk/support-a-good-cause](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/support-a-good-cause)

Just search for:

8,000+ retailers will donate to us whenever you shop with them



Plus, you'll get...

  
Exclusive retailer offers

  
Competitions

  
A warm feeling inside!

Over  
**£60m**  
raised for UK good causes

**£0**  
extra cost to anyone

Love of Learning, Love of Life itself and Love of God