



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: 11 25/26

Dear Families,

This week's newsletter has a strong history focus, and what better time to reflect on our past than during our 180th anniversary year. I was absolutely delighted this morning to receive a beautiful copy of a watercolour painting from a resident of Hormead village. The painting, created in 1844 by James Wilcox (1778–1865), shows Hormead School as it once was. If you look closely, you may be able to spot the small attic bedroom where the headteacher at the time, Miss Needham, lived with her mother. I'm not entirely sure what would have been worse – living with your mother in an attic (sorry mum) or living at school – although I do occasionally wonder whether the children think I do too!



Few people can say they have experienced their village school both as a pupil and later as a member of staff across so many decades, but Mrs Tompkins certainly can. Her lifelong connection with Great Hormead School began on **8 January 1964**, when she started as a five-year-old pupil. She followed a well-trodden path, as her father, uncle and aunties had all attended Hormead before her. Growing up in the village meant freedom and trust walking to school unaccompanied, like most children. Lessons were relaxed but purposeful. Afternoons were often dedicated to PE, art and crafts, and Mrs Tompkins still remembers with pride making a pair of braces and a braided cotton belt. In May, they would dance around the Maypole, wearing pinafores they had stitched themselves from embroidered anglaise. When a pool was installed on the school grounds, it became the highlight of hot summer afternoons. School meals were something to look forward to, with the school cook cycling in each day from Buntingford, preparing fresh meals using produce donated by local farmers. Winters were particularly memorable in those days. One year, the snow was so deep that Mrs Tompkins and her friends built a full-sized igloo – big enough to sit inside. One of her fondest memories was when the school acquired a bus affectionately named *Nelly*, complete with a toilet, which amazed everyone. *Nelly* took pupils on many adventures, including a trip to Ireland, where they travelled around by horse-drawn gypsy caravan.



A photo of Mrs Tompkins and the children painting Nelly the school bus. Note the lack of safety devices for the children standing on the trestles!

At the age of 11, in year 6, Mrs Tompkins left Great Hormead School for secondary education, but her story with us did not end there. She returned in **1991** as a member of staff, and goodness me, does she have a story to tell. You will be able to read more about her remarkable journey in our next newsletter.

Please do support our fundraising adventure to be a part of history and make even more memories for our school. We are very much looking forward to welcoming you into school next week for parent consultations to share with you the many wonderful things your children have been doing, celebrating their progress and achievements together. Have a lovely weekend, hopefully with better weather!

Lynda Cowler, Headteacher

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Reasons to Celebrate

Class Stars of the Week



You make us so proud!

Hedgehogs	Sophia Barlow	<i>For speaking and singing out loud in group situations</i>
Hedgehogs	Beau Burrowes	<i>For great listening skills and excellent sequencing of the butterfly cycle</i>
Cherry	Lucy Parkyn	<i>For being such a kind friend to others</i>
Cherry	Matilda Risley	<i>For always showing such creativity!</i>
Willow Y1	Daphne Richardson	<i>Showing aspiration in all her learning and trying extra hard with her handwriting</i>
Willow Y1	Evy Stock	<i>For always showing cooperation by listening to her friends and all adults and making right choices</i>
Birch Y2	Ivy Stock	<i>For her resilience and aspiration in maths</i>
Birch Y2	Tommy Sandford	<i>For trying hard and challenging himself in his learning</i>
Oak Y3	Holly Hagley	<i>For being involved and contributing to class conversation a lot more</i>
Oak Y3	Sully Warby	<i>For writing a fantastic persuasive text about Buntingford in English</i>
Oak Y4	Joey Kostur	<i>For giving lots of great answers in science</i>
Oak Y4	Winnie Richardson	<i>For a noticeable change in her confidence this term</i>

Values Hearts



Cooperation	Elliott and Tommy	<i>For working well together during science</i>
Cooperation	Riley Stoker	<i>For always making sure all the Hedgehogs are ok and happy</i>
Cooperation	Poppy Flanagan	<i>For always being a super helper to adults and children</i>
Cooperation	Maggie, Alfie & Ernie	<i>For great communication and togetherness during their music performance</i>
Cooperation	Jessie, Miles, Roma, Zac, Theo and Carter	<i>For helping tidy away equipment at lunch</i>
Cooperation	Archie Newman	<i>For holding the door open for others</i>
Kindness	George Apostolos	<i>For returning misplaced items to Their owner</i>
Kindness	Freddie Bray	<i>Playing really nicely with Ismaeel</i>
Kindness	Matilda Risley	<i>For looking after hurt friends</i>
Resilience	Harry Pavitt	<i>For coming in to school with a smile on his face</i>
Resilience	Ivy Stock	<i>For trying hard and not giving up in Maths</i>
Resilience	Charlie Dunhill	<i>For trying so hard in literacy</i>
Aspiration	Albie Hennessey	<i>For trying really hard in phonics when spelling words</i>
Aspiration	Oscar Cockerton	<i>For trying his best in English when writing his story</i>

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Aspiration	George Hayden	<i>For being a great example and showing the values of a 'Super Hedgehog'</i>
Aspiration	Zac Paddington-Dark	<i>For his creative ideas on the carpet</i>
Aspiration	Matilda Doherty-Huggins	<i>For working hard in Maths</i>
Aspiration	Maggie Kirwin	<i>For working hard in Maths</i>
Aspiration	Conor Cawthorn	<i>For amazing phonic work and remembering what a homophone is and giving examples</i>
Aspiration	Mia Santoli	<i>Trying really hard in maths to use the bus stop method</i>
Aspiration	Fred Brown	<i>Trying really hard in maths and not giving up</i>



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

SILVER AWARD: Tommy Sandford, Alyssia Tache, Fred Brown, Louis Doherty Huggins



Congratulations to:

Harper Munday & Oliver Ward

For earning a pen licence



Baby News!

Huge congratulations to the Sandford family on the birth of Teddy Lee James, a beautiful little brother for Sienna and Tommy. Teddy was born on 28th January weighing 9.7lbs. Welcome to the Hormead family Teddy. We can't wait to meet you!

Goodbye

We would like to take this opportunity to say a fond farewell to the Hodgkins family as they embark on their very brave adventure of moving to France. We are going to miss George enormously. He has been a very special part of our school community and was often seen lending a hand around the site – frequently helping the caretaker! 😊

George has brought us so many smiles with his willingness to always help, especially when it came to big jobs around the school, as well as his passion for the outdoors and farming. He is truly a born farmer.

We have loved getting to know Evie and George and wish the whole family so much love and happiness as they begin this exciting new chapter. Please do keep in touch!

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Class News

Forest School

It's a bit like Spring is playing hide-and-seek with us at the moment. We've caught a glimpse of warmer times, but it isn't fully in sight yet! Despite the weather, Hormead children continue to show resilience and curiosity for Forest School sessions. I love their enthusiasm - it is infectious!

We have enjoyed the fire pit recently with some creative children really losing themselves in mindful colouring near the flickering flames and warmth. Others have engaged their muscles, digging what I've heard being described as a tunnel or a crater or a hideout. I did wonder if it might be a trap, but no adults have fallen in yet, which is good. The Hormead birds are still hungry, and we've continued to provide snacks for them and have been rewarded with increased close sightings of feathered friends in the forest. It's quite magical to be talking about birds and have a chaffinch or a robin or a crow swoop nearby. We are also noticing Hormead worms. I guess this is great weather for them. The longest real worm was measured at 11cm and the longest rubber worm found was 19cm. Oak class have also started drawing the forest from a birds-eye view. I hope to use their excellent drawings to create the Hormead Forest School map.

Ivy Eileen



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Hoglets Class – age 2 and 3 years



This week in Hoglets has been full of curiosity and creativity. In music this week the children have been learning about different instruments from around the world, they were introduced to a new instrument called a "Djembe" from West Africa and enjoyed playing patterns and listening to the noises it makes.

Our theme of Submarines has been a hit this week, the children enjoyed making submarine windows where they painted a paper plate and chose what fish they would stick on to see through their window, they then stuck on the top of the window to finish it off.

We have also been painting bubble wrap to print onto fish which the children enjoyed seeing the different patterns it made.

In mark making some of the children have been practicing tracing over letters in their name and attempting to write numbers 1,2 and 3. We have been developing our gross motor skills by having time on the big playground on the bikes and scooters. The children have loved biking round the track and avoiding obstacles. We have had some lovely sensory trays for the children to explore which have been full of creativity and concentration. We had a little hope of Spring this week and the children loved playing on the field, splashing in muddy puddles and climbing on the apparatus. What an exciting couple of weeks we have had.

Mrs Eves, Mrs Plumb, Mrs Maretta



Hedgehogs Class – age 3 and 4 years



count.

Over the last two weeks, the Hedgehogs have been wonderfully busy learners, diving into a range of creative and curious activities. They have proudly completed their very own non-fiction books, now displayed on our classroom wall for everyone to enjoy. In maths, the children have been exploring the value of 3 and impressed us by confidently demonstrating their understanding of 5 as well. They have also been practising subitising, quickly recognising quantities without needing to count.

This week, our learning has been inspired by The Hungry Caterpillar as we explored the life cycle of a butterfly. The children were fascinated to learn the new word metamorphosis and used it beautifully in their discussions. They also enjoyed creating



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their own caterpillars using toilet roll tubes and experimenting with paint to make symmetrical butterfly wings by folding their artwork to mirror the pattern on each side.

Looking ahead, we are excited to celebrate Lunar New Year next week and begin talking about Pancake Day, which always brings lots of enthusiasm and conversation.

The children have also been making fantastic use of our loose parts shelf, using the materials to design their own patterns, pictures, and imaginative creations. Their ideas have been thoughtful, inventive, and full of personality.



A big thank you to everyone who has kindly brought in loose parts for our collection. Your contributions make a real difference and help enrich the children's play and learning every day.

Mrs Stuart, Mrs Larman, Miss Jackson

Maple Class – SEND

How lovely has it been to finally enjoy some sunshine? Maple Class have certainly been making the most of it! The brighter weather has given us lots more opportunities to spend time outside, and the children have absolutely loved interacting with others across the school. It's been wonderful to see so many happy faces as everyone shares playtime, explores the outdoor spaces and enjoys the warmth together.

Indoors, Maple Class have been getting stuck into something just as exciting: music! The children have been exploring a range of musical instruments while listening to songs by Andy Pidcock. They've been experimenting with tempo, volume and all the different ways they can make sounds — from gentle taps to big, enthusiastic shakes. Each session brings something new, and it's been such a joy to hear the variety of vocalisations, giggles and proud moments as they discover what they can do.

Whether they're soaking up the sunshine or creating their own mini-concerts, Maple Class continue to bring so much energy and enthusiasm to everything they do. We're looking forward to even more fun as the term continues!



Mrs Lynch, Mrs Dunn and Mrs Wade

Cherry Class – Reception

We have had a busy few weeks in Cherry Class as we have continued with our journey through the animal kingdom! Last week our focus was the jungle / rainforest. We used the book 'Monkey Puzzle' as our stimulus and the children enjoyed creating a huge jungle mural, as well as making parrots using paper plates! This week, our focus has been

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ocean animals. The children have loved exploring our ocean tuff tray outdoor rock pool, as well as making their own sea creatures in our creative area. For example, yesterday, the children used bubble wrap to print scales onto fish.

We are really encouraging lots of writing and mark making through our provision and we have been so impressed with the children taking on the challenge to practice at home too. In our literacy, the children have been working incredibly hard on their animal story books, building on their sentence writing to talk about what their chosen animal is up to! We can't wait to share these with you at parents evening- we think you will be equally impressed! In Maths, we have been working on our number skills to 8 including introducing

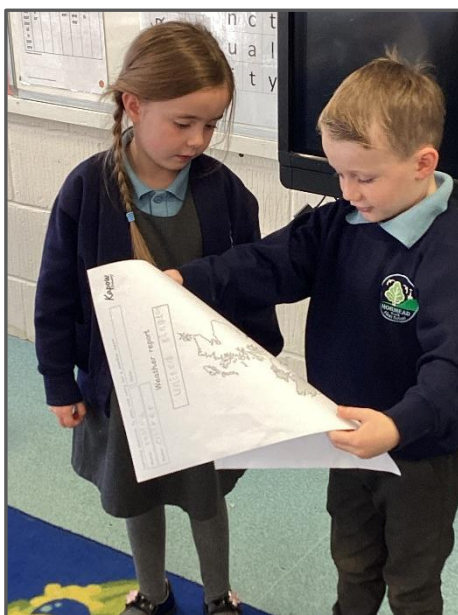
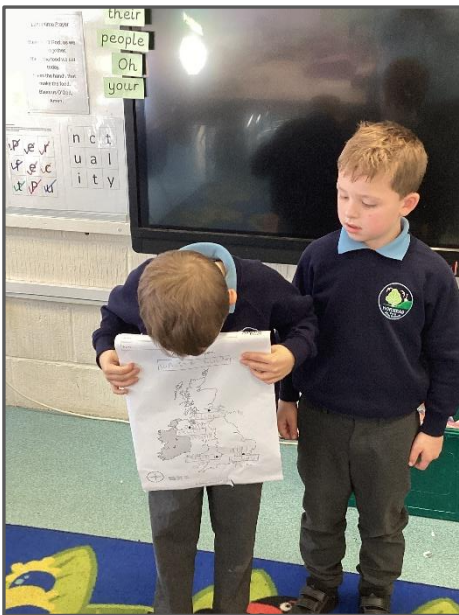


some trickier concepts such as doubling. We also enjoyed exploring pairing using lots of pairs of colourful socks - thank you for your help with this!

Next week, we will explore safari animals!

Mrs Guilliam, Miss Griffin and Mrs Villar

Willow Class – Year 1



We have had a busy and exciting half term in Year 1, particularly in our geography learning.

Our geography focus has been all about the weather in the United Kingdom. We began by learning about the four countries that make up the UK: England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, identifying where they are on a map and learning their capital cities. The children did a fantastic job remembering lots of new vocabulary and enjoyed testing themselves and their friends.

We then explored the difference between weather and seasons, learning that weather is what it is like outside right now, while seasons describe similar weather patterns over several months. After learning the four main compass points, the children used directional language to describe weather in different parts of the UK, such as "In the North it is windy and raining." This led to some wonderful discussion and confident use of geographical language.

One of the highlights was keeping a weather diary for a week to look for patterns and similarities. Unsurprisingly, "cold" and "raining" were the most commonly used words!

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To finish the unit, we thought about which activities can be enjoyed across multiple seasons and which are best suited to specific seasons. We also discussed how we can prepare ourselves for the different types of weather we experience throughout the year in the UK.

Looking ahead to next half term, we will be moving on to history, where we will be learning about how toys have changed over time. A trip is currently being finalised to support this topic, and we will send a Ping with full details as soon as everything is confirmed.

Finally, a quick reminder that reading at home, spellings homework and Numbots are extremely important. We have noticed that the amount of reading at home and spelling scores have noticeably dipped in Willow class recently. Please remember that children will not be entered into the weekly raffle if these are not completed.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. It really does make a huge difference.

Mrs Ward, Miss Ellis and Miss Haywood

Birch Class – Year 2



In Birch class this half term in history, we have been asking the question 'how did we learn to fly?'. We have learned about different people from beyond living memory and within living memory, considering their achievements and historical significance.

We began by learning about the first flights and the work of the Wright brothers. We looked at

key events from their lifetime, thinking about what had the greatest impact on them, such as being fascinated by a flying toy when they were young. The children enjoyed acting out the first successful flight, taking on the roles of different people who were there - the brothers piloting and pushing the plane and eyewitnesses - and then sharing what they might have been thinking or feeling at the time.

We then learned lots about Bessie Coleman, the first African American woman to obtain an international pilot licence, and Amelia Earhart, the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. We have been looking at primary sources such as photographs, artifacts, and interviews, using our historian brains to look for clues that tell us things about the past.

Finally, we learned about humans using their knowledge of how to fly and building on it to venture into space. We watched footage from the first moon landing and pretended to interview Neil Armstrong once he returned to Earth, asking him about his journey, what he did on the moon, and what happened next.

Miss Sawyer and Mrs Buckmaster



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Oak Class – Year 3 & 4



Oak Class have had an exciting and very busy few weeks diving into our History unit: “*What was important to the Ancient Egyptians?*” The children have absolutely loved exploring this fascinating civilisation, and they’ve impressed us with how much they’ve remembered (and how many Egyptian gods they can now name!).

We began by looking at the hierarchy of Ancient Egypt and discovering why pharaohs held such incredible power. From studying pyramids to learning about the Valley of the Kings, the class quickly realised just how much planning, teamwork and belief went

into building and honouring these extraordinary structures.

The River Nile has also been a major focus. We explored why it was so vital for farming, travel and daily life, and why the annual flooding was celebrated rather than feared. The children were especially intrigued to learn about Upper and Lower Egypt and that “Upper” Egypt is actually in the south!

One of the highlights was investigating the Egyptian creation story. The class enjoyed meeting characters such as Nun, Ben-Ben, Atum, Ra, and Osiris, and discussing how these myths helped the Egyptians explain the world around them.

We also looked at the afterlife, learning why Egyptians placed such importance on preparing for it. This led to our very memorable hands-on activity: mummifying a tomato! Using salt, careful wrapping and plenty of patience, the children recreated the process step-by-step. Several children even made their own sarcophaguses at home!



Mr Armes, Miss Wentworth, Mrs Crowe and Miss Standing

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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

Morning Club

Please note that Morning Club starts at 7.45am. Mrs Prior tries to get in for 7.30am but she needs time to set up before the children arrive. There are only a couple of families who have put in a special request for their child to come in earlier for work reasons. Please be mindful of this. Many thanks

Calendar Dates coming up

Changes or additions to the calendar dates are marked in red

February 2026	
Monday 9 th	Parent Consultations (Y4 only) – 2pm start in classroom
Tuesday 10 th	Parent Consultations (Y1 to Y3) – 3pm start in hall
Tuesday 10 th	Safer Internet Day
Wednesday 11 th	Parent Consultations (Nursery & Reception) – 1:30pm start in hall
Friday 13 th	Non-Uniform Day / Cake Sale after school
Friday 13 th	Valentines Disco (during school day) – Bring £1 donation
16th to 20th	HALF TERM WEEK
Tuesday 24 th	Y1 Willow Class Celebration Assembly (9:30am)
Friday 27 th	Newsletter 12
March 2026	
Monday 2 nd	Y3/4 Dance Festival (5pm) team tbc
Tuesday 3 rd	Oak Class Rapid Fire Cricket – Sele School
Wednesday 4 th	Y2 Birch Class Celebration Assembly (9:30am)
Thursday 5 th	World Book Day – Dress up as a book character.
Thursday 5 th	2:45pm – Parents stay and read
Wednesday 11 th	Y3 Oak Celebration Assembly (9:30am)
Thursday 12th	Reception – Nurse for vision and hearing screening and heights and weights
Friday 13 th	Newsletter 13
Sunday 15 th	Mother's Day
Monday 16th	Walk and Wheel to school 2-week Challenge begins
Monday 16 th	Y3/4 Bikeability training - Day 1
Tuesday 17 th	Y3/4 Bikeability training - Day 2

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Tuesday 17th	Year 2 Tag Rugby Festival – St Edmunds
Wednesday 18 th	Y4 Oak Celebration Assembly (9:30am)
Thursday 19 th	Eid
Saturday 21 st	PTA Colour Run – details to follow
Thursday 26 th	Newsletter 14
Thursday 26 th	10am Easter Service at St Nicholas Church led by Cherry Class
Thursday 26 th	School ends at 1pm for Easter Holidays
April 2026	
Monday 13th	Back to school

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

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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.

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