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: 02 Oct 26/27

Dear Families,



What glorious weather we have been enjoying! It made the annual call from our school governor, Farmer James even more welcome, inviting us to take part in the potato harvest.

This much-loved tradition has been part of our school community for over 100 years. Thankfully, unlike the early 1900s when children were whisked away to the fields for the day, we now have a more organised approach! The children went out in groups, enjoyed digging for potatoes, had the chance to sit on the tractor, and, of course, took home as many potatoes as they could carry.

This year, however, our budding potato pickers seemed to be taking their role rather seriously. Several children were carefully inspecting their harvest and rejecting any potatoes with the slightest blemish or hole, rather as though they were working to strict supermarket or EU grading regulations! Farmer James looked a little concerned as perfectly good potatoes were being tossed back into the field. I hope many of those carefully selected potatoes made it home and onto your dinner plates.



Experiences like these are such a valuable reminder of where our food comes from and help children develop a real appreciation for the countryside and farming. A huge thank you to Farmer James for helping us keep this wonderful village tradition alive and for giving the children such a valuable opportunity to learn where their food comes from. And if you haven't yet discovered his morning coffee box outside the barn, I can highly recommend it. The coffee is excellent, and the sausage rolls and flapjacks are worth arriving early for!

Thank you also to everyone who joined us for our Stay and Watch Phonics Morning. We know that attending school events isn't always possible, particularly for working parents, so please never feel guilty if you can't make it. We appreciate all the support you give from home.

These sessions do, however, offer a lovely opportunity for families to see learning in action and gain a greater understanding of the experience's children enjoy each day. We are keen to offer more opportunities like this throughout the year, alongside a series of parent workshops where we can share useful information over a cup of tea or coffee.

Our next parent workshop will take place on **12th November at 1:15pm**, when one of our family support partners will be sharing practical advice on routines, boundaries, consequences, gaming and sleep. There are sure to be some useful tips, so please do come along if you can.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.
Mrs Cowler, *Headteacher*

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Reasons to Celebrate

Stars of the Week ☆☆☆ ☆☆☆ You make us so proud!

Hedgehogs	**Jacob S**	*Super learning all the time.*
Hedgehogs	**Matteo**	*Remembering the word 'nocturnal' and its meaning*
Squirrels	**Jude B**	*His amazing effort in all he does – especially phonics!*
Squirrels	**Beau**	*For being a kind friend when someone was sad*
Otters Y1	**Nazar K**	*Creating beautiful organic shares in art!*
Otters Y1	**Hermione H**	*For being the most wonderful role model in everything she does.*
Badgers Y2	**Adeline D**	*Continuously working hard in all her work and contributing to class discussion*
Badgers Y2	**Albie ML**	*For working hard in all his work and asking his teacher how he can help.*
Foxes Y3	**Alfie D**	*Fantastic effort in maths all week*
Foxes Y3	**Alex**	*For always trying to think creatively and imaginatively in every English lesson.*
Owls Y4	**Harry C**	*Recognising how a scientific test could be improved.*
Owls Y4	**Freddie B**	*For the effort he has been putting into his writing in English.*

Values Hearts



Thank you to the following children for going above and beyond in demonstrating our Christian values this week. We are incredibly proud of them.

Love	*Poppy F, Sophie J*
Cooperation	*Aubrey B, Maisie E, Brooke R, Jude R, Jacob, Jude M*
Courage	*Raphael F, Louie S*
Kindness	*Gracie-May B, Aubrey-Mae P, Poppy FH, Matilda R, Charlie D, Nazar K, Charlie M, Oliver, Poppy G, Pela, Poppy*
Honesty	
Resilience	*George A, Noah H, Sonny*
Aspiration	*George H, Charlie D, Charlie M, Romie K, Carter C, Theo F, Archie B, Luca C*

House Point Award



Well done to the following children on the fantastic achievement of filling up their House Point Chart and progressing to the next level! Your hard work, positive attitude and commitment to our school values have truly paid off. Keep up the great work!

BRONZE AWARD	Zac PD in R, Charlie D in R,
SILVER AWARD	Albie ML in Y2, Oliver A in Y2, Adeline in Y2
GOLD AWARD	

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Class News

Sporting Updates

Year 1 Development Day



Otter Class had a fantastic time at the Development Day at Simon Balle School. The children threw themselves into every activity with enthusiasm, determination and lots of smiles.

We started the morning with football challenges, including *Beat the Goalie* and *Get the Treasure*. The children showed great control as they dribbled footballs around moving "cannons" to collect treasure. Next, we tried tennis, and it was wonderful to see so many children demonstrating a natural talent for the sport. If your child enjoyed this activity, please take a look at the free tennis lesson flyers sent home.

After a quick snack break, we tackled a variety of athletics activities including quick-feet ladder drills, beanbag throwing challenges, weaving through cones and relay races. We then put our teamwork skills to the test with some exciting orienteering activities, working in pairs to find and identify different images around the field.



Our final challenge involved finding all the giant cards from our team's suit spread across the astro. Although it took longer than expected, the children worked brilliantly together and were incredibly proud when they completed their task.

We were so impressed by the children's enthusiasm and the way they demonstrated our school values throughout the day. They had a wonderful time, and well-deserved participation certificates will be coming home today.

Forest School





A mouse took a stroll through the deep dark woods… and just like that, lots of stories and creativity begin in nature.

This week, as we celebrate Autumn, the children have been using tools safely and carefully to create their own conker creatures — bears, vampire bats, caterpillars, and even tigers. I heard a few of them growling, and it made me wonder what sort of adventures they'll go on next.

Many of the precursors to creative writing begin in the forest: role play, exploring, imagining, and building characters from the natural world. The therapeutic, sensory environment encourages richer descriptions and deeper imagery. Last week around the fire, someone noticed "the sticks turning into bones" and, as always, the smell of smoke inspired everyone to mention delicious marshmallows. Hormead's little chefs often offer me "the best cappuccino ever" or chocolate brownies that melt in your mouth, and the descriptions we hear when identifying an unknown bird or butterfly would make any teacher smile.

In Forest School, children are constantly using their hands in purposeful, varied ways. Tool use — like palm drills, peelers, and striking a fire steel — builds the same muscles needed for a steady, comfortable pencil hold. Handling small natural objects such as conkers, sticks, leaves, and beech nuts develops the pincer grip and finger dexterity essential for forming letters. It may not feel like it, but some activities in the forest are a wild version of finger gym.





Nature continues to be the perfect spark for storytelling — a place where English learning grows wild and wonderful.

Ivy Eileen

Hoglets Class – age 2 and 3 years



Over the last two weeks, our themes have been "My House" and "My Pets." We have explored different types of homes and talked about how houses are built. The children have loved sharing who is in their family and describing their homes.

We have enjoyed many exciting activities, including drawing around shapes to create houses, painting and printing with blocks and Duplo, and using chocolate playdough with rollers and bricks to encourage imagination and creativity.



Our building-site tuff tray has been very popular! The children used shaving foam and sand as pretend cement, alongside bricks and plastic trowels. Outside, we explored water and sand with colourful sea creatures and enjoyed a tactile sensory table.

Our home corner has been busy with imaginative play, including pretending to cook dinners and caring for families.



This week, we have been learning about pets. The children have enjoyed looking at pet photographs displayed on our wall, encouraging lots of communication and conversation. Our tuff tray became a vet's surgery, and we explored animal footprints using paint and large paper.

Outside, the children enjoyed colour sorting with a variety of objects. Our investigation table included magnets, magnifying glasses, and colourful bottles and shakers.

Next week's theme is "What I Like Doing." We will explore the children's interests, favourite activities and things they enjoy. We will continue supporting the children as they develop their confidence, independence and curiosity through play.

Mrs Plumb, Miss Jackson and Mrs Villar

Hedgehogs Class – age 3 and 4 years

This week in Nursery, we have been developing our love of language, stories and books through lots of exciting activities. The children have been busy creating their very own lift-the-flap books, thinking carefully about what might be hiding underneath each flap and using their imagination to create their own stories.



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We have also been practising making predictions when listening to stories, thinking about what might happen next and explaining our ideas. Our new Poem of the Day has been a wonderful opportunity to explore poems together. We have been talking about the meaning of new words and thinking about what the author might be trying to tell us.



Each week, we introduce a new word and its meaning. For example, 'nocturnal', and the children have enjoyed learning that it describes animals that are awake and active at night.

Every day, we enjoy songs and rhymes, as well as sharing a story together before lunchtime. The children have continuous access to our writing area and reading corner, both indoors and outdoors, where they can explore books, mark-make, practise writing and develop their communication and language skills through play.

Mrs Stuart, Mrs Larman, Miss Jackson

Robin Class – SEND





Robin Class have continued to settle really well into the new school year, and we are so proud of the fantastic progress they are making. The children have been busy exploring lots of exciting learning opportunities, with many of our activities delivered through a sensory approach. From hands-on experiences to engaging sensory play, the children are absolutely loving their learning and are showing great enthusiasm each day.

One of our favourite parts of the week has been Rhyme Time during Phonics. The children have thoroughly enjoyed listening to a range of nursery rhymes and then exploring the different sounds linked to each rhyme. It has been wonderful to see how engaged they are during these sessions. Some of the children have been using their voices to identify the sounds they can hear, showing growing confidence in their communication skills. Other children have been making fantastic progress by choosing between two symbols to indicate which sound they can hear. We are incredibly proud of all the children for working so hard and celebrating their individual achievements.

It has been a lovely start to the term. Well done, Robin Class. Keep up the good work!

Mrs Lynch, Mrs Dunn and Mrs Wade

Squirrels Class – Reception

Squirrels Class have had a busy fortnight as we explore our 'All About Me' theme. Last week, we looked at our friends and used the text 'The Squirrels Who Squabbled' as our core book. We thought about our friends, and what it means to be a good friend to others. The children particularly enjoyed making friendship bracelets to gift to their friends. This week, we have looked at our feelings and emotions using the book 'The Colour Monster' as our core text. The children have been amazing at naming and recognising different emotions, and we are beginning to think about how feelings can feel physically too.

In phonics, the children are continuing to learn initial sounds, practice forming these, and are also beginning to build their early blending skills when reading CVC words such as cat, dog, mat, sip. We have also learnt the tricky words 'I' and 'is' - these are words that don't follow normal phonics patterns and must be learnt to be read on sight.

In Literacy, the children have been doing their first book making project - creating books all about themselves. They have worked incredibly hard on these and are really proud of them, as are we. Each session, we have made a new page such as our favourite foods, favourite toys etc - and the children have even begun to apply some of their phonics by writing the initial sound of what they have drawn e.g. c for car.





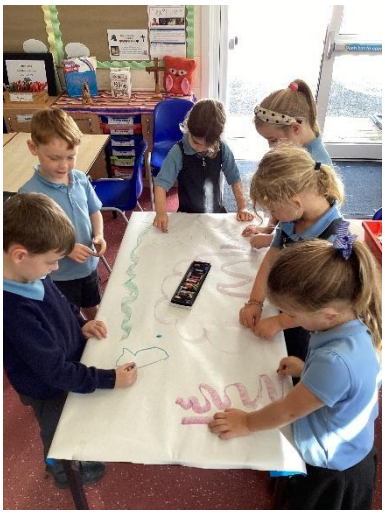


We are looking forward to seeing you at our assembly on Monday at 2.45pm in the Hall.

Mrs Guilliam, Miss O'Connor, Miss Griffin and Mrs Eves

Otters Class – Year 1

Otter Class has been incredibly busy and hardworking in English so far! We have been revisiting the sounds we learned in Reception and have begun "growing the code" by learning new ways to write familiar sounds. The children have embraced this challenge wonderfully and are showing great enthusiasm as they develop their phonics knowledge. There is always some friendly competition when 'Percy Pointer' is on the lookout for children who can recognise our tricky words by sight.



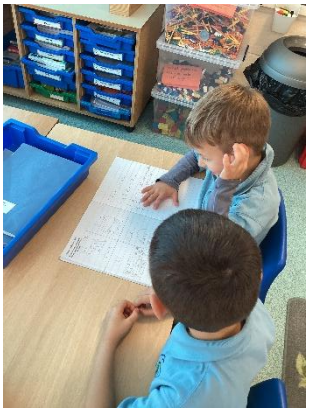
We have explored what makes an effective label and why labels are important before creating our own. We are now working hard on sentence writing, retelling part of Puffin Peter and even creating our own innovative endings to the story. The children are using their phonics skills to attempt more challenging words and are becoming increasingly confident at remembering to leave spaces between words so their writing can be read clearly.

A key focus of our English curriculum is developing transcription skills, helping children transfer their ideas from their heads onto paper. We practise this daily by thinking of a sentence, saying it aloud three times, holding it in our minds, and then carefully sounding out and writing each word. This is a complex process for Year 1 children, as there are so many steps. We are already seeing good progress in the children's transcription skills since September. The resilience and aspiration shown by Otter Class have been truly amazing, and we are incredibly proud of all they are achieving.

We will soon begin preparing for our class assembly, where the children will share some of their learning with you. Lines will be sent home soon to practice.







A gentle reminder to please ensure reading books and reading records are in school every day, as we use them to record reading group sessions and monitor children who may benefit from additional reading support.

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Keep up the amazing effort and enthusiasm Otter class!

Mrs Ward, and Miss Ellis

Badger Class – Year 2





Badger Class have been working hard in English and have made some fantastic progress with their reading and writing.

We have recently finished our text Frog and the Stranger, and the children really impressed me with their narrative writing. They have been developing their ability to write interesting and engaging stories, using a range of conjunctions to join their sentences together. The children have also been experimenting with exciting vocabulary to make their writing more interesting for the reader, and it has been wonderful to see them beginning to use expanded noun phrases too. I have been particularly proud of the enthusiasm and creativity they have shown in their independent writing.



We are now moving on to our new book, How to Make Friends with a Ghost. We will be discussing the idea that, according to the book, ghosts can make good friends because they are fun and interesting. This will give us lots of opportunities to think about what makes someone a good friend.

As part of our writing, we will be learning how to use commands and two-clause sentences to create clear instructions. As children will be writing instructions for a younger reader, explaining how to be a good friend, we are hoping to have the exciting opportunity to share and read our instructions with another year group, giving the children a real audience for their writing.

It has been wonderful to see Badger Class growing in confidence as writers, and I am looking forward to seeing where our new book takes us!

Mrs O'Mara and Mrs Crowe

Fox Class – Year 3



Fox Class have made a fantastic start to the term in English and have shown great enthusiasm in all of their learning. We began by exploring the story Mini Rabbit, Not Lost, which inspired us to write our own adventure stories. The children enjoyed creating characters who set off in search of something important, only to become lost along the way. They worked hard to develop exciting story plots, describe different settings and think carefully about how their characters would solve problems and find their way home. It was wonderful to see their creativity shine through in their writing.

More recently, we have been studying the poems Words Are Ours and The Magic Box. As part of this unit, we have explored how poets use descriptive language to create vivid images in the reader's mind. We have focused on using adjectives effectively and learning how to punctuate sentences correctly when more than one adjective is used to describe an object.

To inspire our writing, we went on a nature walk around the local area, stopping at different points on our journey to the church to focus on our senses. The children listened carefully to sounds around them, noticed sights in nature and thought about the smells, textures and feelings they experienced. Using these observations, they wrote their own versions of a magic box poem filled with natural objects and sensory details. The poems have been full of imagination and wonderful descriptive language. Next, we will be building on this work by using our imaginations to create even more wild, wacky and magical items to include in our own unique magic boxes.



Mr Armes and Miss Standing

Owl Class – Year 4







Owls class have had a fantastic start to the term in English, exploring a range of exciting texts and developing their skills as both writers and speakers.

We began by reading 'The True Story of the Three Little Pigs', a humorous tale in which the wolf attempts to persuade the reader that he is innocent. The children enjoyed discussing the evidence for and against his claims, carefully considering different viewpoints before reaching their own conclusions about whether the wolf was guilty or not. It was wonderful to hear the thoughtful arguments and reasoning that emerged from these discussions.

This led us into our work on persuasive writing. We analysed a variety of persuasive speeches, identifying the techniques that make them effective. The children learned how writers and speakers use rhetorical questions, address their audience directly, support opinions with facts and employ the 'power of three' to strengthen their arguments. They then applied these features in their own persuasive speeches, encouraging others to agree with their point of view or make a change. After writing their speeches, the children practised delivering them confidently and expressively, thinking carefully about their voice, pace and expression. We were delighted when Mrs Cowler joined us to listen to some of the speeches. She was extremely impressed by the quality of the children's work and even commented that some of their ideas were very tempting!

More recently, we have been exploring free verse poetry, taking inspiration from 'A Dinosaur at the Bus Stop' by Kate Wakeling. The children have shown great creativity as they have imagined creatures in all sorts of strange and amusing situations such as a monkey in a classroom, a dragon in a library, and a polar bear in the toilets. We have focused on choosing precise and powerful vocabulary to help readers create vivid pictures in their minds. To develop our understanding of verbs and adverbs, we acted out a variety of movements and discussed how different word choices can completely change the way an animal appears to move. The children are currently putting the finishing touches to their poems, and I am looking forward to hearing about all the bizarre and wonderful adventures their creatures have.

Miss Sawyer, Miss Wentworth & Mrs Kozub

Brief from the Office:

Are you receiving Universal Credit?

If so, your child may be eligible for benefit-related Free School Meals. Registering for Free School Meals not only provides additional support for your family but also allows the school to receive extra funding to help support your child's education and wellbeing.

Even if your child already receives a free meal through the universal infant free school meals scheme, it is still important to register if you are eligible.

If you think you may qualify, or would like to find out more, please contact the school office. We are happy to help and all enquiries will be treated confidentially.

Every registration makes a difference to the support we can provide for our children.

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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Dairy Dates for the Autumn Term 2026

Any changes are in red font

October		
02/10/2026	Friday	Newsletter 02
05/10/2026	Monday	2:45pm Reception Celebration of Learning (parents and family)
06/10/2026	Tuesday	1:30pm Open Afternoon for prospective Reception 2027
12/10/2026	Monday	1:45pm Under 4's stay and play in Forest School (advertised externally)
13/10/2026	Tuesday	2:45pm Y1 Celebration of Learning (parents and family)
15/10/2026	Thursday	**10am - Harvest Festival led by Y2's at St Nicholas Church**
16/10/2026	Friday	Newsletter 03
16/10/2026	Friday	World Food Day - details to follow
17/10/2026	Saturday	10am-12pm School Open Morning for Prospective Parents
19/10/2026	Monday	Black History Focus Week - details to follow
19/10/2026	Monday	Flu Vaccinations - need to sign agreement please, info to follow
20/10/2026	Tuesday	Parent Consultations pm (R-Y4) – from 2pm in hall
23/10/2026	Friday	Non-uniform Day / Cake Sale (please bring cakes to sell)
26/10/2026	**Monday**	**Half Term**
November		
02/11/2026	**Monday**	**INSET DAY – school closed for staff training**
		Primary applications open
03/11/2026	Tuesday	9:30am Open Morning for prospective Reception 2027
05/11/2026	Thursday	2:45pm Y2 Celebration of Learning (parents and family)
06/11/2026	Friday	Newsletter 04
06/11/2026	Friday	Y2 Trip to Hitchin Schools Museum
		FIREWORKS NIGHT (PTA fundraising event)
09/11/2026	Monday	Year 3 & 4 history trip to Celtic Harmony (TBC)
09/11/2026	Monday	9:30am Open Morning for prospective Nursery parents
11/11/2026	Wednesday	11am Remembrance Service led by Y1 at Hormead Memorial
12/11/2026	Thursday	1:15pm Parent Coffee afternoon with 'Families in mind workshop'
12/11/2026	Thursday	2:45pm Y3 Celebration of Learning (parents and family)
16/11/2026	Monday	Odd Socks Day - Anti Bullying week
17/11/2026	Tuesday	9:30am Open Morning for prospective Reception 2027

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19/11/2026	Thursday	2:45pm Y4 Celebration of Learning (parents and family)
20/11/2026	Friday	Newsletter 05
20/11/2026	Friday	PTA Christmas Shopping Event
24/11/2026	Tuesday	10:30 - EYFS Nativity Dress Rehearsal (Whole School)
26/11/2026	Thursday	10:30am & 2pm – EYFS Nativity Play
30/11/2026	Monday	Christmas Story Writing competition
December		
01/12/2026	Tuesday	9:30am Open Morning for prospective Reception 2027
03/12/2026	Thursday	Calendar & Craft Day + PTA Christmas Gift Wrap - details to follow
04/12/2026	Friday	Newsletter 06
07/12/2026	Monday	Mrs Finch returns from maternity leave
07/12/2026	Monday	9am - Whole School Panto -Robin Hood (Village Hall)
08/12/2026	Tuesday	2:30pm - Y1&2 Festive Festival (parents and family)
08/12/2026	Tuesday	5:00pm - Y1&2 Festive Festival (everyone welcome - mince pies and mulled wine!)
11/12/2026	Friday	Parent help assembling the Hampers please
14/12/2026	Monday	Children deliver Calendars to community
16/12/2026	Wednesday	Christmas Jumper Day & Christmas Lunch Visit from Father Christmas
17/12/2026	Thursday	10am – CHRISTINGLE SERVICE – Led by Year 4's at St Nicholas Church (everyone welcome)
17/12/2026	Thursday	School Ends 1pm Newsletter 07
18/12/2026	**Friday**	**Occasional Day - School Closed**
21/12/2026	**Christmas Holidays begin**	
January		
04/01/2027	**Monday**	**INSET DAY – school closed for staff training**
05/01/2027	**Tuesday**	**Children back to school – Start of Spring Term**