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: 03 Oct 26/27

Dear Families,

Sometimes I wish you could be a fly on the wall in our school! Every morning starts with a clear plan in my head of everything I need to achieve that day, but I honestly can't remember a single day that has ever gone exactly to plan. In the space of an hour, I can find myself solving a playground dispute, discussing curriculum developments, dealing with a bumped head and wondering where my cup of coffee has disappeared to! School life is certainly never dull. Thankfully there is far more laughter than anything else and I genuinely love what I do, but it was nice to escape the chaos last Thursday and attend the Primary Headteachers' Conference.

It was such an inspirational day and reassuring to spend time with colleagues and be reminded that Headteachers everywhere are navigating the same challenges, particularly with the growth of AI and trying to stay one step ahead. There were also plenty of ideas and initiatives I'd love to bring to our little school. Unfortunately, many come with a huge price tag attached, so for now they'll remain firmly on the Hormead wish list.

Back at school, this week has been all about Harvest. Our Year 2 children led a wonderful Harvest Service. It felt a little different this year without Reverend James, but we were incredibly grateful that Reverend Sarah Bagnall stepped in at short notice. The children spoke confidently, sang with great enthusiasm and made us all smile with renditions of Cauliflowers Fluffy and the Harvest Samba. We are incredibly proud of them.



Thank you also for your generous food donations. Buntingford Food Bank was genuinely overwhelmed by the amount collected and had to make two trips to take everything away! They asked me to pass on their heartfelt thanks. It is always lovely to see our school community come together to support others.

One of this year's Harvest highlights had to be the giant domino run made from cereal boxes. The children lined them up across the playground and, to everyone's amazement, it worked perfectly first time! Judging by the cheers in the video, I think we may have accidentally started a new Hormead Harvest tradition.

Today, wonderful aromas of cooking have been drifting through the school as every class enjoyed making pizzas. The children have thoroughly enjoyed the experience, tasting new flavours and exploring different foods as part of our World Food Day celebrations.

Finally, a reminder about our **Fireworks Event** on the first Friday after half term. This is our biggest fundraising event of the year, and we really do need as many helping hands as possible, particularly for setting up and clearing away. If you can spare some time, we would be hugely grateful, there is a sign-up sheet at the entrance to school. As with all community events, what we put into it is very much what we get out of it.

Have a wonderful weekend and 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	**Maisie E**	*Having a more settled week and being a super hedgehog*
Hedgehogs	**Abdullah T**	*For settling in so well in Hedgehogs and recognising his colours*
Squirrels	**Freddie F**	*Trying so hard in all his learning*
Squirrels	**Wren D**	*For giving things, a go and always trying her best*
Otters Y1	**Sienna H**	*A positive attitude to all her learning and independent work in maths*
Otters Y1	**Carter C**	*His amazing effort and achievement in phonics*
Badgers Y2	**Emilia D**	*Working independently in maths this week and trying her best*
Badgers Y2	**Arthur F**	*Working hard in all lessons this week, especially science*
Foxes Y3	**George B**	*Consistently aiming high and trying his best in English*
Foxes Y3	**Spencer B**	*Continually trying to improve his handwriting*
Owls Y4	**Sophia M**	*Reading with expression to help make meaning clear.*
Owls Y4	**Noah D**	*His brilliant effort in his learning this half term*

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	Olive in R, Sadie, Charlie, Zac, Romie, Poppy and Theo in Y1
Cooperation	Ember in R, Jasper in R, Joe & Sully in Y4, Izzy in R
Courage	Miss Standing, Mrs Villar, Jasper in R
Kindness	Riley in R, Daphne in Y2, Nazar in Y1, Sadie in Y1, Casper in Y3, Freddie F in R
Honesty	
Resilience	Alfie in R, Julia in Y4, Sulley in N, Sonny in N
Aspiration	Travis in Y2

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	Jesse in Y1, Stanley in Y1
SILVER AWARD	Oscar in Y2, Poppy in Y2, Alex in Y2
GOLD AWARD	

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Forest School





Autumn is such a beautiful season! Over the past few weeks at Forest School, we've been captivated by Mother Beech as her leaves turn beautiful shades of gold and copper and amazed by the sheer number of beech nuts scattered across the forest floor. If every seed grew into a new beech tree, we'd soon have a forest of more than a thousand trees!



Of course, we're also keeping an eye on the squirrels and their enthusiasm for this autumn feast. I spotted the plumpest squirrel I've ever seen in Hormead Forest recently! Life is certainly good for that furry little creature.

Autumn is also known as spider season, and it's been fascinating to hear how different families cope with these eight-legged visitors venturing indoors. We've been exploring the important role spiders play in food chains and how hard they work creating webs to catch their food. Perhaps, rather than flushing them away, we might give them a helping hand back into the garden, where they can get on with their very important work.





And as we gently encourage our little arachnid visitors back outside, let's remember to pause, take a deep breath, and savour the wonderful scents of autumn.

Ivy Eileen

Hoglets Class – age 2 and 3 years



We have had a wonderful time exploring our themes 'What I Like Doing' and 'My Favourite Foods', enjoying lots of exciting, hands-on activities!





Outdoors, we created a car wash using big sponges and water. Our investigation table became a messy 'Find the Bug' activity, filled with soil and magnifying glasses. The children also explored mark making using tin foil, paint and cotton buds, as well as icing sugar on the tuff tray.

This week, our focus has been on The Very Hungry Caterpillar. The children decorated biscuits with icing and edible eyes, tried porridge and discussed healthy and less healthy foods.

Outdoors, we created a vegetable patch using potatoes and carrots. The children loved planting and watering, learning how we care for plants and where food comes from.

Our sensory activities included homemade moon sand using conditioner, which the children loved exploring for its smell and texture. We also created colourful caterpillars using shapes, pipe cleaners and paint.

To celebrate World Food Day, the children made their own pizzas using a variety of toppings. It was lovely to see them choosing ingredients independently and showing confidence and enthusiasm.

Thank you for your continued support. We look forward to sharing more exciting learning adventures with you soon.

Mrs Plumb, Miss Jackson and Mrs Villar

Hedgehogs Class – age 3 and 4 years





This week in nursery, the children have been exploring Harvest Festival and learning why we celebrate this special time of year. We watched an informative video about Harvest Festival and discussed the importance of giving thanks for the food we grow and the hard work of farmers. The children enjoyed sharing their ideas about where different foods come from, discussing whether fruit and vegetables grow on the ground or on trees.

We have taken part in a variety of exciting activities, including creating our own harvest baskets using clay, exploring fruit printing, colouring pictures and sorting foods into healthy and unhealthy categories. These activities have supported the children's creativity, fine motor skills and understanding of healthy eating.



Today, we are celebrating World Food Day! The children brought in their own pizza toppings and used their chopping and cutting skills to prepare and decorate their very own pizzas. We will also be making fresh salsa, giving the children further opportunities to explore different ingredients, textures and flavours.



Our learning will continue next week as we begin our new theme, 'The World Around Me'. We will continue to explore where our food comes from, discover different foods from around the world and develop our understanding of the wonderful world we live in through fun, sensory hands-on experiences.

Mrs Stuart, Mrs Larman, Miss Jackson

Robin Class – SEND





Robin Class have had a lovely couple of weeks and have been busy with lots of exciting learning! The children have particularly been enjoying our History lessons, where we have been exploring photographs of family members. It has been wonderful to see the children engaging with the pictures and making meaningful connections to the people who are important in their lives.



Using their voices, signs, or communication symbols, the children have been identifying different family members they can see in the photographs. It has been lovely to watch their faces light up as they recognise familiar people and proudly share who they are, with their friends and staff. These special moments have provided lots of opportunities for communication, interaction, and personal expression.

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As part of our learning, the children have also used the photographs to create their very own Family Books. The children have enjoyed helping to put their books together and are very proud of the finished results.

We are so proud of all the children and have loved seeing their confidence and communication skills grow through this meaningful and engaging topic. Well done Robin Class!

Mrs Lynch, Mrs Dunn and Mrs Wade

Squirrels Class – Reception



This half term, our theme is 'All About Me', and the Squirrels have been busy exploring what makes us special! Last week, we enjoyed reading Funnybones, which sparked conversations about our similarities, differences and body parts. The children loved creating skeletons using hammer and nail boards and straws, as well as looking in mirrors and drawing their own faces. In PSHE, we explored how our bodies express feelings, discussing excitement and the feeling of having butterflies in our tummies. This week, we continued our learning by exploring different emotions and using our facial expressions to show how we feel.



We also enjoyed reading The Very Hungry Caterpillar, which inspired the children to create their own books about food, act out stories in our role-play grocery shop and experiment with fruit and vegetable printing. We finished the week by celebrating World Food Day, where the children had great fun tasting new ingredients and making their own delicious pizzas. What a wonderful couple of weeks of learning, creativity and discovery in Squirrels!

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

Otters Class – Year 1



This half term has been full of exciting learning and thoughtful discussions in Year 1.

In PSHE, we have been exploring emotions and feelings, learning about the six basic emotions: happiness, anger, disgust, surprise, sadness and fear. Through stories, discussions, facial expressions and body language, the children have developed a greater understanding of how emotions can affect both themselves and others. We have also talked about ways to manage big feelings and identified trusted adults who can help us when we need support. The children have shown empathy, kindness and maturity throughout this aspect of their learning.

In Geography, we have been busy becoming young map makers. The children have explored the school grounds, learned about aerial views and created imaginative 'messy maps' of the classroom. They then used their new knowledge and value of cooperation to draw maps of the school grounds, complete with symbols and keys. To finish the unit, we carried out a survey of our outdoor spaces and have begun designing improved playground and field areas, thinking carefully about how we can make them even better.





After half term, we will begin our new History topic, "How Am I Making History?" To help bring our learning to life, we would be grateful if children could bring in three photographs of themselves: one as a baby, one as a toddler and one recent photo. We will use these to create personal timelines and explore how we change over time. All photographs will be returned, and we will take

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pictures of the children's timeline work for their books. Thank you for your support!

Mrs Ward, and Miss Ellis

Badger Class – Year 2

In PSHE, Year 2 have been learning how to keep our bodies healthy and happy. We have explored the importance of exercise and moving our bodies, as well as discussing our bedtime routines and why getting enough sleep helps us to grow, rest and feel ready for the day ahead. We have also been learning about healthy eating, naming and describing a range of fruits and vegetables and discussing which foods help keep us healthy and which are best enjoyed as occasional treats. Finally, we have explored how and why we should look after our teeth, learning about the importance of good brushing habits and keeping our smiles healthy!

In History, Year 2 have been exploring how our school has changed over time. We have practised ordering photographs on a timeline and asking questions about the past. We were delighted to welcome Mrs Heraud, a former teacher at our school and now school governor, who shared her experiences and helped us discover what school life was like within living memory. We also used maps to investigate our school's history beyond living memory.



We have compared schools from the 1900s with schools today, identifying similarities and differences between classrooms. The children enjoyed discussing which classroom they would prefer to learn in and explaining why. Some thought sitting in rows would be interesting, while others preferred our colourful classrooms and interactive whiteboards!

We are looking forward to building on our learning after half term when we visit a Victorian school on our class trip. We can't wait to discover what school life was really like in Victorian times!

Mrs O'Mara and Mrs Crowe

Fox Class – Year 3



This term, Fox Class has been developing our understanding of emotions, wellbeing and mental health through a range of engaging PSHE lessons.

We began by exploring the difference between emotions and feelings, learning how emotions can create physical responses in our bodies. We discussed how our bodies can give us clues about how we are feeling, such as a racing heart when we are nervous or a smile when we are happy.

Building on this, we looked at body language and facial expressions, recognising how these can help us understand how someone else might be feeling. We practised observing different non-verbal cues and discussed the importance of showing empathy and kindness towards others.

We also learned about the close connection between our minds and bodies, exploring how our physical and emotional wellbeing can affect one another. As part of this learning, we investigated the importance of sleep and the impact it can have on our mood, concentration and overall health. To put our learning into practice, we took part in a week-long sleep challenge, trying different strategies to improve our sleep habits and reflecting on the results.

More recently, we have explored a variety of healthy ways to manage strong emotions. The children discovered techniques such as drawing, gratitude journaling, mindfulness activities and listening to music, discussing how different strategies may work for different people.

To conclude our learning, we focused on recognising when it is important to talk to a trusted adult about our feelings and understood how seeking support can help us look after our mental wellbeing.

We are incredibly proud of the maturity, thoughtfulness and enthusiasm Fox Class has shown throughout these important discussions.

Mr Armes and Miss Standing

Owl Class – Year 4







In PSHE, we have been thinking about how to stay healthy in both body and mind. We have explored the importance of eating a balanced diet, drinking plenty of water and staying active to keep ourselves feeling healthy, happy, and energised throughout the day. We have also discussed different ways to ask for help when we need it and how we can support others when they need it. Another important focus has been developing a growth mindset. We have been learning that mistakes help us learn and that resilience is important when tackling challenges, role-playing different scenarios to see how we could persevere.

In Geography, we have been investigating mountains, volcanoes and the structure of the Earth. The children enjoyed creating plasticine models to represent the Earth's inner core, outer core, mantle and crust, helping them to understand the structure of our planet. We have learned about tectonic plates and explored what happens when they move in different ways, including how some mountains and volcanoes are formed. The class considered the advantages and disadvantages of living near volcanoes and discussed why people might choose to live in these areas. We have also examined the effects earthquakes can have on people, buildings and the environment.





Miss Sawyer, Miss Wentworth & Mrs Kozub

Brief from the Office:

Ping

Please ensure that you check Ping regularly, parents are missing important deadlines, and we are not always able to chase for individual responses; unfortunately, this may lead to your child missing out. If you have any issues accessing Ping, please let us know.

Fireworks Raffle

Raffle tickets are coming home today, please look out for them in your child's bag. Completed tickets and money can either be popped into the office or in the letterbox.

Many thanks

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



Dairy Dates for the Autumn Term 2026

Any changes are in red font

October		
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 – please sign form emailed from NHS
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
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**