



NEWSLETTER CHRISTMAS 2025

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Dear Parents and Carers

As we reach the end of the Autumn term, I want to say a huge thank you to everyone for making it such a positive and successful few months. The children have worked hard, supported one another, and made us all proud, staff have shown great energy and commitment as always, and, parents and carers, your support makes a massive difference.

It's been a busy term with plenty to celebrate, and now it's time for everyone to take a well-earned break. I hope you all enjoy a restful Christmas with family and friends, and come back in January refreshed and ready for another exciting term ahead.

Merry Christmas and a happy New Year to you all!

Alastair Haywood
Headteacher
Chalfont St Giles Village School



School View



Nursery

We collected lots of autumn leaves and the children painted them.



Jelly play for our red colour day.



Using our fine motor skills to tap small pins into a pumpkin.



Odd sock day for Anti-bullying week. At Nursery we talked about being kind and we read stories about Elmer the elephant and discussed how he was different to all the other elephants.



We planted daffodil bulbs to take home and wait for them to grow in the Spring.



We did splatter painting in the playground, flicking the paint to make a firework picture. We made rockets to add to our firework picture and Diya lamps to celebrate Diwali.



School View



Nursery

We played in the snow!



We wrapped parcels so that we could play pass the parcel at our pretend birthday party. We played pass the parcel at our party for our Nursery mascot called Pickles the tiger. We had so much fun!



Remembrance Day poppies.



Collaborative artwork for our Pop Art theme during Arts Week. The children started using one colour to print and collage and each day added another colour.



We used pompoms, feathers and sparkly jewels to decorate these Christmas trees. We have loved playing in Santa's Grotto and dressing up in Christmas costumes! We made our own Christmas tree from boxes and decorated it. It is so beautiful!



School View



Reception

The children have really enjoyed getting into the routine of school life here at Chalfont St Giles Infant and Nursery School. They stuck themselves into some hands-on learning where they have started to learn Phonics sounds and have started to learn to read.

To reassure the children and help them settle, they read Ruby's Worries and Hello Friend where we talked about different skills that they could use to navigate their way through their very first term of school.

The children have started to learn all about shapes, patterns and numbers to 5 and have started to look for signs of patterns in their learning environment as well as looking out for the different numbers and the different ways to make the numbers.

They enjoyed getting to know the older children when Year 3 came to share a book with them during cross-site reading, they weren't as big as they first thought and it was nice for the Reception children to share their favourite book with them.

We have learnt all about the gingerbread man and thought of creative ways to trap him. Some children came up with an idea to create a trap with a cookie in it, and another child thought the gingerbread man could be caught by a helicopter. They enjoyed writing all about the gingerbread man and having to write our 'secret codes' on their writing to make magic happen. To end our learning of the story they cut and baked some gingerbread men to decorate, and they loved the fact they could take their gingerbread home to eat afterwards. Reception also managed to fit some science into the Gingerbread Man and left a few to soak in different liquids; water, oil and vinegar. There was a lot of discussion about what happened to each Gingerbread Man, they particularly liked the way he disintegrated and turned into a mush in the vinegar.



School View



Reception

There was lots of fun that was had at Family Day where Pearl class parents helped to decorate the gingerbread men and Sapphire Parents had the delight of joining in with Forest School. Mrs Lloyd-Evans was very impressed with their dedication.

The children have also got used to their outdoor environment where there have been a wide variety of activities to choose from and explore. They have been developing their fine and gross motor skills and have been exploring lots of sensory activities, ooblek being an old favourite, along with picking sunflower seeds from an old sunflower head.

The children have learnt about so many different festivals such as Diwali, Hanukkah and Christmas. They also learned about why we have poppies on Remembrance Day and had great fun creating different poppies and even created a poppy wreath made from their handprints.

There have been so many firsts that many of the children have experienced, for example Forest School where they have looked for teddies and built homes for them.

Let's not forget the fantastic show that the Reception children put on for their Nativity, 'Shine, Star, Shine,' They definitely did all shine and made us all so proud. The singing, dancing and speaking was absolutely wonderful and enjoyed by all.



School View



Year 1

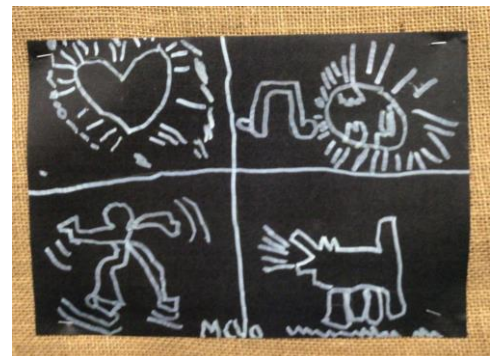
Outdoor Explorers

Year 1 have had lots of fun learning outside the classroom with Mrs LLOYD-EVANS. They have observed the changes of the seasons and how animals adapt to the changing weather. Working in small groups, the children built shelters to protect an animal, thinking carefully about the materials they used and whether they are Windproof, Waterproof, Warm and Welcoming.



Arts week

This year's theme was Pop Art where the children explored the bold colours and prints of different pop artists. Emerald class made clay donuts and bold artwork in the style of Andy Warhol. Ruby class created portraits of themselves using collage and bold figure drawings in the style of Keith Haring.



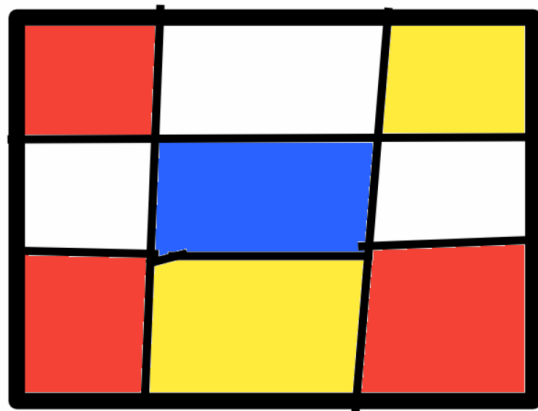
School View



Year 1

Computing

In Computing this term we talked about technology, how it helps us and how to use it responsibly and safely. We learnt to identify a computer and its main parts and explain what they do (screen, keyboard, mouse/track pad.) We used a mouse to click and drag objects on a screen and create a picture. We also used a keyboard to type on a computer and edit text. We explored the online 'Paintz' program to create self portraits and artwork in the style of the artist Mondrian.



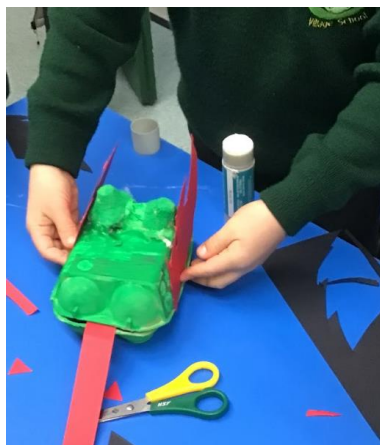
School View



Year 2

Year 2 has had a very busy and exciting first term!

In Literacy, we enjoyed creating Egg Box dragons as part of our instructions unit where we followed-step-by-step instructions to design our own dragons before writing our own set of instructions for others to follow.



As part of PE, we had a great time attending the Amersham School Football and Orienteering Sports Festivals where we participated in football team games at and used skills like following symbols where we raced to find locations at the orienteering festival. We showed great teamwork, determination and sportsmanship at both festivals!



School View



Year 2

During Arts Week, Year 2 created Pop Art inspired by famous Pop artists Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein where we experimented with bold colours, repeated patterns and creative designs to make their own artwork creations that are now proudly on display in the corridor, brightening up our school.



In Science, Year 2 have absolutely loved learning about habitats and microhabitats where we explored the school grounds to observe, gather and record data about different minibeasts and the microhabitats they live in. We enjoyed honing our scientific skills as we investigated the tiny worlds around us.

We have certainly made the most of a very busy first term and enjoyed finishing it with our Barmy Bethlehem Christmas play!



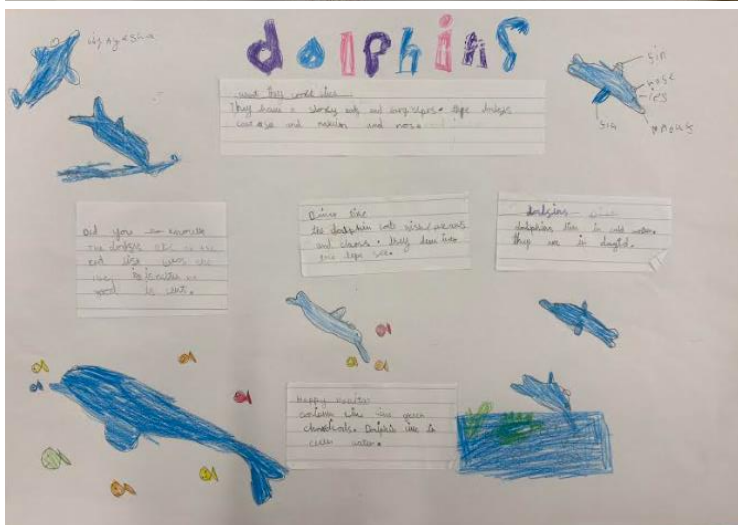
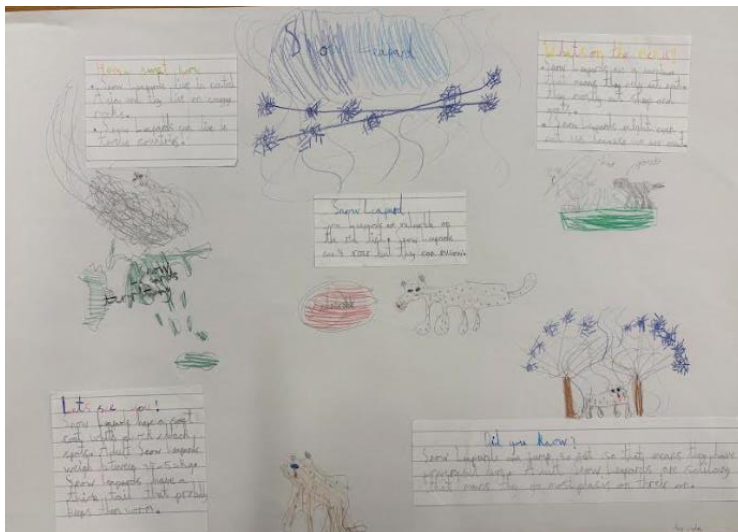
School View



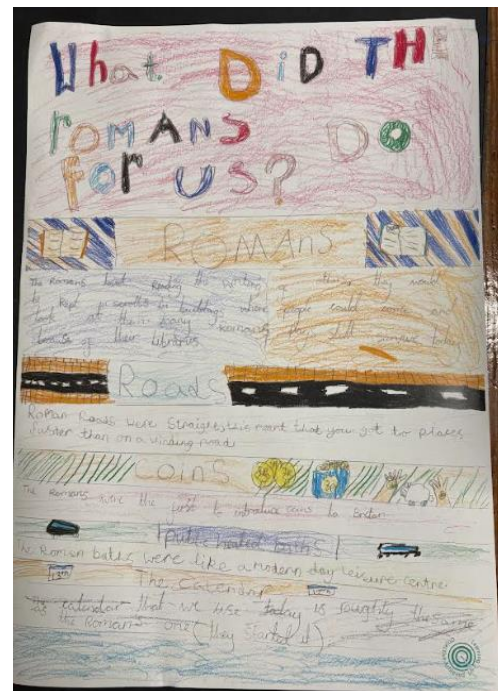
Year 3

As we reach the end of a busy and exciting term in Year Three, we are delighted to share some of the wonderful learning and experiences the children have enjoyed.

In Literacy, we explored two beautiful stories, *The Tin Forest* and *The Last Wolf*. The children produced some fantastic jungle setting descriptions filled with vivid detail. Alongside this, we learnt about endangered animals and created information texts.



Our History lessons took us back in time to learn about the Roman Empire, a topic the children found fascinating. They enjoyed discovering what life was like for Roman soldiers, how the empire expanded and the lasting legacy the Romans have left on our lives today.



In Geography, our focus on volcanoes and earthquakes sparked plenty of interesting questions and discussions. The children learnt how these natural events occur, where they are found around the world and how they can affect people and places. We even had a debate about whether we would live near a volcano!

School View



Year 3

In Design and Technology, the children worked incredibly hard to develop their sewing skills. They learnt appliqué, practised running stitch and even tried cross stitch, showing great perseverance and creativity throughout.



During Arts Week, we explored the theme *Art Through the Decades* by focusing on the 1980s and the work of Keith Haring. We created our own pieces inspired by his early graffiti drawings on empty subway billboards and his bold, energetic colour blob figures.



We also placed a big emphasis on reading for pleasure this term. The children enjoyed visiting the book fair, spending time in the library and choosing new stories at the second-hand book sale. Their enthusiasm for reading has been wonderful to see.

We ended the term in true festive spirit with our Christmas carol service, where the children sang beautifully and represented the school with pride. It was a lovely way to finish the term. The Year Three team would like to wish all our families a peaceful festive season.

School View



Year 4

Year 4 have enjoyed a busy, fun-packed Autumn full of exciting learning experiences.



In History, we have been investigating how the lives of children have evolved over time by studying various sources. We looked at the differences between the experiences of children in Tudor and Victorian England and those of children in the present day. In Geography, we have been studying the Amazon rainforest, focusing on its different layers, its climate and indigenous communities.

One of the biggest highlights of this term has been DT! We had great fun designing and creating an anti-theft device using electrical circuits. In Science, we have been learning all about sound and electricity and the best part by far was experimenting with different circuits and seeing them work.



We have had great fun in PE learning how to play netball and developing our basketball and gymnastics skills. In Music, we have learned to play a range of chords in our ukulele lessons and can now play and sing along to several songs. We have also been busy practising for our carol service, which has been an enjoyable and exciting experience.

In Literacy, we have been busy creating imaginative, magical stories inspired by *Leon and the Place Between*. We have also really enjoyed exploring different types of poems. We had a wonderful visit to the library and were lucky to stay dry between the showers.

For Arts week, we created geometry artwork inspired by Sophie Taeuber-Arp. The final pieces are impressive and definitely add colour to our classrooms.



We are looking forward to all the exciting things the Spring Term has in store for us.

School View



Year 5

As usual, it's been a busy and eventful Autumn term in year 5. In science we have been looking at materials and their properties throughout the term.

Children role-playing how a metal conducts heat when the molecules begin to vibrate as the heat travels through it. We also looked at the effects on different materials as they dissolved in various substances; here the colours in skittles dissolve in water to produce an interesting pattern.

In Design and Technology, we looked at pop-up books and made our own versions designed for younger readers. The levers, sliders and pop-up mechanisms were a lot of fun to make ourselves!



Is that Jack climbing his beanstalk?



Some of us made our own fairy tales. That's a cute looking bear!



In Arts week, we looked at the painting style of the American artist Alma Thomas, who used mosaic brushstrokes and bright colours, and was inspired by nature, space, and music. We combined these techniques with ideas from our class text *Journey to the River Sea* to produce our own images of the Amazon, where the story is set.

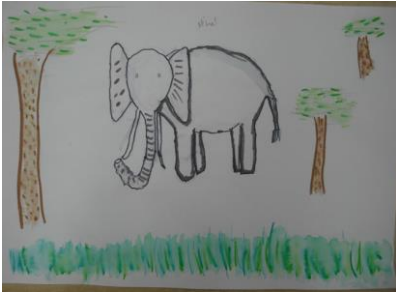


School View



Year 5

In the art curriculum itself, we had a lot of fun exploring and developing our drawing skills in the style of Charlie Mackesy, the artist and author of some very beautiful books. We learned how to sketch an image, outline it in dark lines and other colours, and then to gently add water to create Mackesy's stylistic effects found in his books and art prints.



Reading is such an important part of our learning. While we are enjoying the great class texts that Year 5 children read, we know it's important to support and encourage our younger readers and show how much fun reading is. The opportunity to read to children at the Infant school is always very welcome!



It's definitely been a busy time in Year 5 this autumn term, with plenty of creative learning taking place alongside some thrilling class texts. We are looking forward to more of the same in spring 2026!

School View



Year 6

We have had a busy and productive start to year six this year. All of the children have roles and additional responsibilities around the school which they perform diligently. This reflects the increased responsibility they now have as the top of the Junior school. Some of our autumn term highlights include:

The Dodgeball Festival

Once again, the reigning champions of CSG visited Amersham to take part in the annual year six dodgeball festival. The event was so popular this year that Amersham divided all the teams into pools, so there were more opportunities to win and be successful. We entered six teams, lead by some fantastic captains and vice-captains, chosen due to their effort and team-work during our PE lessons. The children did us proud: not only were they fantastic dodgeball players, but they were fair and patient when situations seemed unjust or the result didn't go their way. At the end of the morning, CSG emerged as the winners of one group in a nail-biting final, and close runners up in the other pool. We had a brilliant time off site at the festival and look forward to the next one.

Literacy

The children have thrown themselves into our learning in Literacy this term, enjoying our two books: 'Skellig' and 'King of the Sky'. Whilst reading Skellig, the children wrote some vivid character descriptions of Skellig himself, as well as a diary entry in role as Michael. After half term, we moved onto the moving and beautifully illustrated 'King of the Sky'. The children sympathised with our main character, putting themselves in his shoes as he gets used to life in a new country, one where he feels he "does not belong." During one of our lessons, we created freeze frames to show the characters interacting at different parts of the story (photos below). The children have really relished opportunities to become immersed in the text, responding creatively both in class and in their written pieces.

Arts Week

During Arts Week, Year 6 studied the cultural mood of the 1960s and examined the work of renowned pop artist Andy Warhol. After learning about his techniques and the themes behind his art, pupils applied this knowledge to design their own self-portraits in the distinctive Warhol style. The results were creative, colourful, and full of personality whilst also being totally unique.



Governor Zone



Parents Evening Survey – November 2025

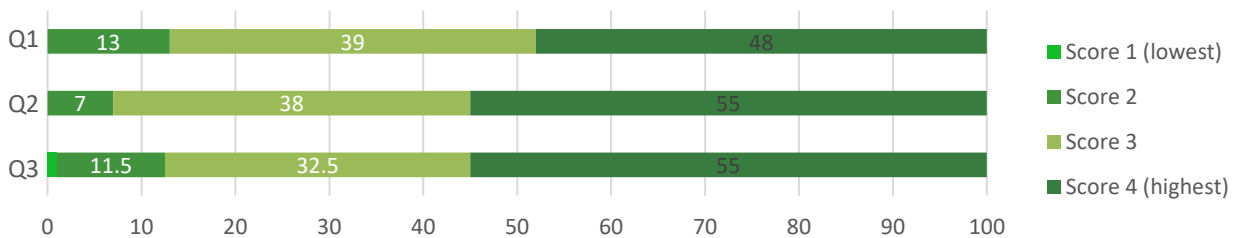
Following completion of the annual Parent Survey, the Governing Board wanted to further understand the topic of Academic Progress and asked the Parent community to offer views.

School Governors and the Head Teacher were present at all Parents Evening sessions to welcome Parents and ask their views via a short, written survey form. Parents were asked to evaluate the statements on a scale of 1-4 with 1 being lowest, 4 being highest. All responses were anonymous.

- Q1: How well does the school communicate your child's academic progress and next steps for learning?
- Q2: How well does the school extend or challenge your child?
- Q3: How confident do you feel in understanding how to support your child's learning at home?
- What could the school do differently to help parents better understand or support their child's academic progress? (freeform text)

Summary of combined results

We received 232 responses (137 juniors, 95 infants). Scores were generally positive across both Juniors and Infants, with most parents rating 3 or 4 out of 4 and they were similar at both sites.



Themes from the feedback

STRONG TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS: Parents consistently praise staff as approachable, supportive, and inspiring.

EFFECTIVE TOOLS: Google Classroom and maths videos are valued for clarity and feedback.

SUPPORT FOR SEN/EHCP CHILDREN: Parents of children with additional needs feel well supported.

FREQUENCY OF UPDATES: Some parents want more regular communication beyond parents' evenings.

CHALLENGE AND EXTENSION: Requests for more stretch opportunities for advanced learners.

CLARITY ON PROGRESS: Some parents want clearer benchmarks against expectations and peers.

HOMEWORK FORMAT AND GUIDANCE: Some desire for more paper-based options and targeted tasks.

Many thanks to everyone who took part, feedback was discussed at our recent Governing Board meeting and will be examined in more detail by the Communication Committee next term. The suggestions and points raised are being looked at by the school to see how they might best be addressed.



Pupils' Views on Maths

Six governors visited the school to speak to children about their Maths lessons. We spoke to four from each class in years 1 and 2 and three from each Maths set in years 3-6.

At the Infants:

- Seven out of eight children said they enjoyed Maths, and some said they enjoyed everything about it.
- Some got despondent when they made mistakes but most also enjoyed the challenge of tackling difficult problems – “It helps my brain grow”.
- They all knew from the teacher’s feedback when they were doing well.
- Some felt lessons are often easy, others too hard and others that they are about right. Most feel they have enough time to practise before moving on, although a few would like a bit more time.
- Most would like to spend more time doing outdoor learning, although they said they did some counting in outdoor lessons. Some of the year 2s used maths at home which they enjoyed. Year 1 had not yet realised that Maths has practical uses outside school.

At the Juniors:

- All the children said they enjoy Maths, and there was a lot of enthusiasm: “I like that we learn things every day and learn more as we go on.” “The teacher makes me want to learn.”
- There was no obvious difference in the level of enthusiasm for the subject between the higher and lower sets.
- The children all enjoyed a challenge and the sense of achievement from getting the right answer.
- Most found the level of the lessons was pitched about right, although a couple in the higher set in the lower years would like to have more difficult work. In the older years they said there are optional questions you can choose to do to stretch yourself and that the teachers give extra help if you’re struggling with a topic.
- Some felt there is not enough time to practise a topic before moving on, others felt it was about right.
- The lower years did not use Maths much outside school or see the practical applications whereas the older years could give lots of examples of the real-world uses of the subject especially as it applied to money, shopping and baking. This seems to reflect the progression to more word-based problems as basic maths skills are mastered and can be applied more widely.
- Nearly all would like to do more outdoor and practical lessons.

All credit to the teachers for engendering this level of enthusiasm for the subject. The feedback will be discussed between the governors and staff in more detail next term.

New Governors

We were pleased to welcome two new governors from the parent body this term, Kym Connolly joined as a full GB member and Javita Malhotra as an associate member.



Making the Vision Real Reaching Greater Depth



At parents' evening and in annual reports, you will often hear that children are "working at the expected standard" or "working at greater depth", particularly in reading, writing and maths. These terms describe not just what children know, but how well they can use and apply their knowledge in different situations. Parents may imagine children working at greater depth are getting a head start on the next year's curriculum. In reality, greater depth is not about racing ahead or tackling secondary school material early but about mastering the current curriculum securely and flexibly so that children can apply their learning in new, complex or unfamiliar contexts.

A helpful way to think about this is to imagine the curriculum as a spiral staircase, with each step representing a concept in learning. To move confidently upward, children first need a firm footing on the step they are standing on, and greater depth means strengthening that footing by exploring connections, spotting patterns, reasoning about ideas and solving problems in different contexts. A child working at greater depth shows fluency, independence and the ability to think critically, rather than simply recalling facts or following set procedures.

In maths, teachers talk about three strands: fluency, reasoning and problem solving. A child working at the expected standard might, for example, correctly add and subtract fractions, showing fluency with the method. Pupils working at greater depth can explain why the method works, choose when it is the most efficient strategy, and use it to solve challenging, multi-step problems, making links with other topics.

In reading, the expected standard involves being able to read age-appropriate texts accurately and answer questions that show basic understanding of what has happened. At greater depth, children go further by inferring characters' feelings and motives, explaining how language creates particular effects, and comparing texts or viewpoints, often justifying their ideas with precise evidence from the text.

In writing, expected standard means that children's work is clear, correctly punctuated and organised, with ideas in a sensible order and sentences that mostly make sense on their own. Greater depth writing builds on this by showing deliberate choices about vocabulary and sentence length to create atmosphere, using 'show not tell' to reveal how characters feel, varying sentence openings, using more complex structures and adapting style to suit the purpose and audience. In short, the expected standard is about being accurate and clear, while greater depth is about using the same skills with confidence, creativity and control to engage the reader more powerfully.

This kind of thinking shows that learning has truly been internalised, and children begin to ask their own questions, justify their opinions and find multiple solutions to a problem. These are essential habits for helping children cope with new challenges they face as they move through school and beyond.

How you can help at home:

- In maths, ask your child to explain how they solved a problem and whether there is another way to do it, encouraging them to compare methods and spot patterns.
- In reading, talk about characters' feelings and motives, ask "why do you think that?" and invite your child to point to words or phrases that support their ideas.
- In writing, discuss word choices when they are drafting, asking how particular words or sentences help to create a mood, and encourage them to try different openings or endings for a paragraph.

To further support parents, we will be running a session in the Spring term exploring more about what greater depth looks like in each subject and spending a little bit longer diving into examples of work that show the differences between that and the expected standard.

Alastair Haywood