



NEWSLETTER SPRING 2026

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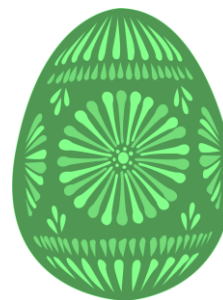
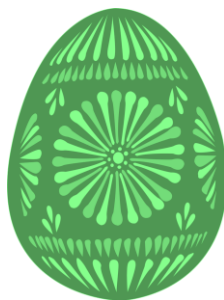
Building Children's Vocabulary

Dear Parents and Carers,

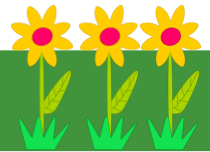
As we reach the end of a short but very busy and rewarding spring term, I would like to thank you for your continued support of our school community. Over the past few weeks, our children have worked incredibly hard and taken part in a range of exciting learning opportunities, performances, and seasonal activities - including a number of school trips, PE festivals and PTA events which have all been thoroughly enjoyable.

Please do read through each year groups entry to celebrate all the wonderful things that have been going on! I wish you all a very restful and enjoyable Easter break.

Alastair Haywood
Headteacher
Chalfont St Giles Village School



School View



Using our Funky Fingers to carefully display the eggs on our Easter tree.



Nursery

We explored printing with flowers which was a lovely sensory experience as they created such a beautiful smell.



Painting on stretched cling film!
This was fun!



Marble rolling on heart shape paper for Valentine's Day.



We observed spring flowers and painted our own daffodil pictures.



School View



We reached 10 diamonds for tidying up the nursery and we had a pyjama party and decorated biscuits!



Nursery

We took part in the Big Garden Birdwatch and we were very quiet in the garden and built a hidey hole to watch from quietly.



We read the story of Oliver's vegetables and we printed with various vegetables.



We planted cress seeds and watched them grow. We put a photograph of ourselves on the pot and watched our green hair grow!

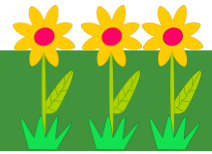


We visited the village Greengrocers to buy blueberries, raspberries, strawberries and bananas to make our own milkshake.

We made a yummy scrummy fruity frothy icy nicey milkshake after reading the story of Oliver's Milkshake. The blender was very noisy so some children covered their ears while we counted to 20 to make sure it was all smooth. It was delicious!



School View



This term has been a shorter term but what a lot Reception have been up to. We started the term learning about Owl Babies by Martin Waddell in Literacy and enjoyed a visit from some owls. The children were able to hold an owl if they wanted and saw them fly too. They topped up their owl facts and wowed their family at home with everything they learned.

Reception



We also learnt all about houses and homes and finished off the topic with a lovely trip to Bekonscot, the weather was on our side, and the children were all beautifully behaved. They enjoyed a ride on the train and looking at all of the model houses, they even saw a model of a man on the toilet which seemed to make their day. They enjoyed a workshop where they went back in time and learnt about the history of Bekonscot and found out that Bekonscot is even older than Disney but not quite as old as dinosaurs.



We have been learning about a huge range of festivals that have fallen in this term, St Patricks Day, Pancake Day, Easter and Eid being a few. To help with their learning about Pancake Day the children tasted different toppings on pancakes. Voting for their favourite. Cinnamon and sugar was a huge hit and the pancakes went down very nicely.

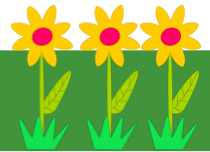


Another story that fitted in perfectly to our topic of houses and homes was The Three Little Pigs where we discussed what makes a good strong house. The children made houses from different materials and had lots of fun being creative, drawing and designing their own houses.

Our Maths lessons have been very hands on whilst we have been learning about weights and measure and also more about the composition of the numbers to 10, including beginning to recognise and understand number bonds to 10. As well as hands on Maths, the children have had a good go at writing number sentences too.

In PE the children have been practising their ball skills and have been learning to aim and throw balls, as well as catching. They have looked at throwing over arm and under arm as well as learning new games to help with the accuracy of their throws. PE is also a great opportunity for children to develop their independent self-help skills and the speed that they change into and out of their PE kit has sped up a lot.

School View



Year 1

In January, Year 1 attended a PE festival at the Amersham School and took part in a series of 'Playground Games'. We used lots of topaz and ruby power to work well in a team and listened well to the Sports Leaders. The games involved throwing, catching, team building, agility and fast footwork.



Ruby and Emerald have enjoyed another fun filled term of Outdoor Explorers with Mrs Lloyd-Evans. We made toys, shapes and creatures out of sticks and other natural materials. In groups, we made large shelters that were strong, waterproof and big enough to fit in all members of their teams. We were challenged to identify different plants and flowers within the Shakman playground. It has been interesting watching the changes of the seasons as Spring has started to blossom!



School View



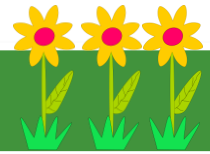
Year 1

One of our writing topics this term has been 'instructions' and we thoroughly enjoyed making jam sandwiches. We had to make sure we followed the steps in order and gave clear specific instructions to our partner. We then wrote our own instructions to teach Mr Haywood how to make a puppet in DT.



In Computing, we enjoyed using the 'Beebots' to develop our programming skills. We predicted and explained what the different commands would do. Then we programmed the Beebots, using the four direction commands, and tested our sequences. We then 'de-bugged' any errors in our program.





School View

Year 2

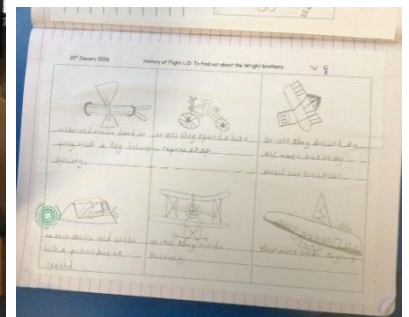
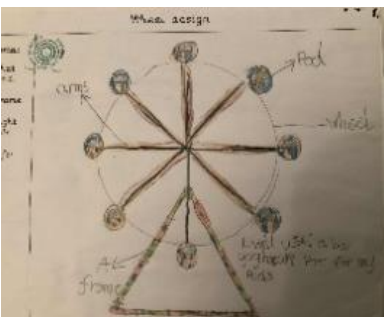
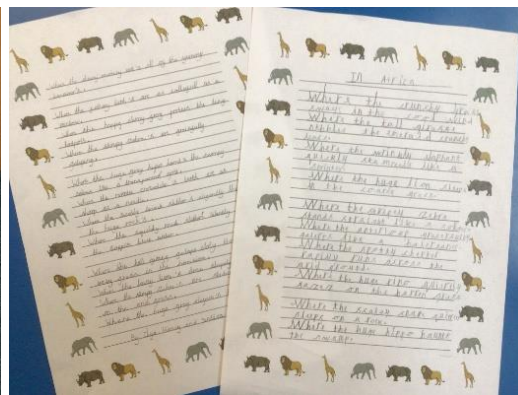
Year Two have been as busy as bees this term, buzzing with curiosity, energy, and enthusiasm! They have embraced new challenges, explored exciting topics, and filled every day with learning and memorable moments.

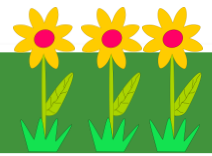
As part of Literacy, we created some lovely African poetry independently then in groups, which the children performed beautifully. Their work is now proudly on display in the corridor for everyone to enjoy. In Science, we explored materials and humans, including animals which included learning about life cycles, sparking curiosity about the natural world.

We really enjoyed our Computing topic about algorithms where we programmed the Beebots and planned routes for them using mats we had designed ourselves.

Our History topic, the history of flight, was especially inspiring. We learned about significant figures such as the Wright brothers, Bessie Coleman, and Amelia Earhart as well as the first moon landing. The children even created their own human timeline to bring history to life!

In Design and Technology, the children thoroughly enjoyed designing, constructing, and evaluating their Ferris wheels. They used paper plates and boxes or bottles for the wheels and frames, choosing their own pod materials. They loved testing how well their Ferris wheels turned and seeing their designs come to life.





School View

Year 2

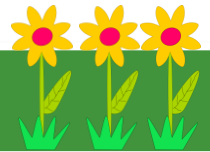
In Art this term, the children explored colour mixing to create secondary colours and experimented with black and white to change depth and tone. They also enjoyed using sponges to make circular shapes, applying their mixed paints with creativity and care.

In PE, we have developed our ball skills by learning different ways to throw the ball and catch carefully. We have also learnt to bounce the ball and move at the same time, taking part in lots of fun games to help develop these skills!

We finished this very busy term with a fantastic trip to Woburn Safari Park. The children loved seeing all the animals, especially the African species, which brought their non-chronological report writing to life as they shared their own fascinating facts. They were thoroughly entertained by a very cheeky monkey who delightfully jumped onto our coach! With the beautiful weather adding to the excitement, it was the perfect way to end an action-packed and memorable term.



School View



Year 3

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

In Literacy, we explored a very informative text which generated lots of interesting questions: *The Pebble in My Pocket*. The children wrote some persuasive letters asking the council to help combat the use of single-use plastic. They also wrote a story about a pebble that was lying on the beach; they definitely used their imagination to create some exciting stories. In addition to this, we learnt about trolls and the children wrote instructions about how to catch a troll and created their own troll which they then wrote a character description about.

This term, our history lessons took us back in time as far as the Stone Age. The children gained an understanding of the timeline and how and what we know about different times based on archaeological evidence. We explored the differences between the Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age and how the different materials transformed farming and trading.

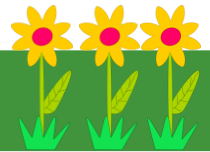
In Geography, our focus on Antarctica sparked plenty of interesting discussions; particularly whether they would want to live somewhere where the days were dark. The children learnt about the lines of latitude and longitude, how seasons are different in the Northern and Southern Hemispheres and the different climate zones.

The children have enjoyed learning about the items and commands used in a French classroom and are beginning to ask and answer questions in French.

Inspired by our History topic, we studied prehistoric art and created our own cave-style paintings. The children experimented with different techniques and materials such as painting with spices to recreate the look and feel of ancient artwork.

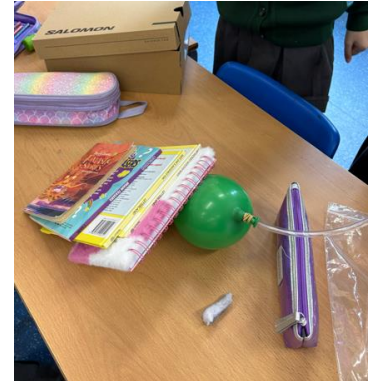


School View



Year 3

In DT, we designed and made pneumatic toys. The children learned how air can be used to create movement and worked carefully to build their own working models. It was fantastic to see their creativity and problem-solving skills in action.



We continued our focus on reading for pleasure this term. The children enjoyed dressing up for World Book Day, visiting the book fair, spending time in the library and choosing new stories at the second-hand book sale.

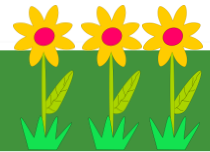
During Science Week, we explored the theme *Curiosity* by taking part in a range of exciting, hands-on activities across Lower Key Stage 2. The children moved between classrooms and investigated their own curiosity questions, explored how boats float, tested different materials to find the most absorbent for a handkerchief and learned about density by discovering how lava lamps work.



Year Three also managed to squeeze a Benchball festival into the short term: the children worked really well as a team, adapting their game and communicating well. It was great to see them excel in areas outside the classroom.

The Year Three team would like to wish all our families a well-earned rest over the Easter break.

School View



Year 4 have had a fantastic and busy term full of exciting learning experiences, and we are very proud of all the children's hard work and achievements.

In Literacy, we thoroughly enjoyed reading *Varjak Paw*. The children were inspired to write their own detailed character descriptions and imaginative stories based on the book, showing great creativity and enthusiasm.

We also had a brilliant time at the fitness festival at Amersham School, where the children challenged themselves with a variety of activities, including burpees and skipping.

In Maths, the children tackled a wide range of challenges both indoors and outdoors, developing their problem-solving skills and building confidence.

Our History lessons focused on the Anglo-Saxons and invasions, bringing the past to life through interactive discussions and tasks. In Geography, we considered our impact on the environment, particularly looking at diet and food miles, helping the children to think more broadly.

In RE, we had the opportunity to visit the Mandir in Neasden, where we learned more about Hinduism and admired the intricate architecture of the temple.

Year 4

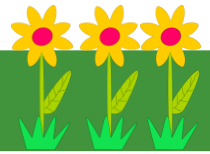
World Book Day was a real highlight, with everyone taking part in a range of fun and engaging activities to celebrate reading.



In Science, we explored digestion, nutrition and how to take care of our teeth. The children showed strong curiosity and asked thoughtful questions throughout. During Science Week, we carried out a range of investigations, including testing which shape makes the best boat and which material would be most suitable for a handkerchief.



School View



Year 5

Year 5 have had a very busy time this spring term. We've had some very interesting learning on the curriculum; in English we've been learning and writing about mythical creatures, such as elves and sprites, and creating our own creatures. We've also been enjoying the wonderful book of narrative poetry called *Love That Dog*, and drawing inspiration from that to write a narrative dialogue and our own narrative poems. Science week took place this term. Year 5 looked at how boats float and how planes fly, as well as a range of 'curiosity questions' we were interested in.



Just how do these things fold and fly?



What is the best design?



How do rollercoasters create energy?



Is it all about the first hill?

In Science itself, we have been learning about living things and their environments. We looked in detail at flowers and their amazing male and female parts. We had the opportunity to dissect flowers and look at their reproductive parts closely.



School View

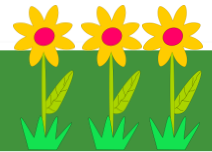


Year 5

At the beginning of March, we had an exciting World Book Day experience, this year coming in to school with a descriptive word alongside a costume. Some of the ideas were supercalifragilisticexpialidocious!



School View



Year 5



We also had an amazing Lego workshop where we had the opportunity to apply some of our programming skills.



In Art this term, children looked at painting and mixed media portraits, exploring creative ways to express themselves through portrait work using both images and words to tell their stories. They experimented with a range of materials and techniques to create imaginative portraits, while developing their understanding of key art vocabulary. A highlight was creating their own portraits inspired by poems, helping them connect their artwork to personal thoughts and feelings. They also explored portraits by other artists and used these as inspiration to create their own collages.



In RE this term, children explored different places of worship, learning about their features, purposes, and significance across a range of religions. Through thoughtful discussions and observations, they developed a deeper understanding of how these spaces are used and why they are important to different communities. We had a terrific visit to the churches in Chalfont St Peter as part of our learning on Places of Worship. It was a great opportunity to get outside, enjoy a walk and have a bit of a picnic lunch, too!



School View



Year 6

We have had a busy and productive term in year six. The children have been going above and beyond in the classroom and during our extra curricular activities.

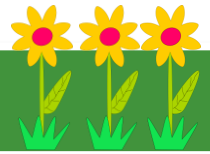
The children celebrated their final primary school World Book Day together, fully embracing our theme of 'Wonderful Words.' A huge variety of creative and interesting ideas were brought to life by the children, including words such as: fragile, creative, appealing and hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia (the fear of long words!)

We enjoyed taking part in a catwalk, talking about our new words and sharing these in class. In the afternoon, the year group visited the village Library. Mrs Peal shared stories that were important in her life and read the children a story, before the children had their own opportunity to choose a new book from the library.



In February we travelled to Milton Keynes to visit the Hazard Alley Safety Education Centre. In the morning, we took part in a 'change and empowerment' workshop, where we discussed gender bias, how to make safe, kind choices, and how to spot when situations are unsafe. The children made sensible and mature contributions, and the workshop gave us all lots to think about especially as thoughts turn to secondary school.

In the afternoon, we started our tour of the safety centre, lead by the engaging volunteers. We encountered potentially hazardous areas like train tracks, road crossings and lakes. We learned about the law around shop-lifting, how to decide a safe route and what to do in the event of an emergency situation. All the children made '999 calls' assisted by volunteers, who helped explain what they would need to say in an emergency situation.



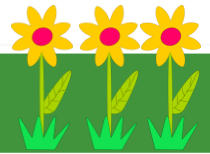
School View

Year 6

This week we were out and about again, this time to Go Ape at Black Park. In all four seasons, we had a fantastic day as a year group. Mrs Thomson and Mrs Starrs created a challenging and fun scavenger hunt for the children to complete around the park, including art, photo and spotting challenges. The children enjoyed bark rubbing and finding different things in nature with their friends. We also had some keen photographers who captured some beautiful pictures of the park. Our second activity was Go Ape, where the children were free to roam up high and choose their level of challenge. The children had great feedback for 'course five' which we are informed is the most difficult and hair-raising!



Governor Zone



School Finances

Many of you will have spoken to members of the School Finance Working Group at the recent Parents' Evenings. They are a group of volunteer parents who have been coming up with lots of creative ideas to increase the funding available to the school. Their hard work complements that of the PTA who have continued to run a fantastic range of events, large and small, to raise funds for the school and to enable children and parents to have some fun in the process. The Governors are extremely grateful to both these groups of parents for all their time and efforts. The funds raised really do make a difference to the school.

The Governors are responsible for overseeing the school's finances, ensuring we have a realistic budget and monitoring how funds are spent. We also have to make major decisions on spending and cutbacks, which is often not easy to do. We have just submitted a three-year provisional budget to Buckinghamshire Council which shows us returning from deficit to a small surplus at both schools in 2028-29.

The decisions we take always put your children first and we work to ensure that their learning journey continues to be happy, positive and full of the rich experiences you rightly expect from our school.

Spotlight on Science

Your children may have told you about their activities in the recent Science Week. Our Science governor, Ann Alderson, visited the Infant School where Key Stage 1 children did a carousel of. Each teacher taught one topic for an hour each afternoon of the week apart from Wednesday, while the classes moved classrooms so that they covered each topic. Ideas and resources were drawn from activity packs on the British Science Week website. The children clearly enjoyed doing the different practical activities, and those spoken to understood what they were learning through the experiments. *What colours make up black ink?* was probably the most 'magical' experiment and finding out *What shape of boat floats best?* by seeing how many marbles their boats would hold was exciting and somewhat competitive!

This week, governors visited both schools to talk to children in years 1-6 about their Science lessons as well as about Science Week. We met with three or four children from each class and really enjoyed hearing their views. It is interesting to see how their skills build as they progress through the school.

All years could describe what they were learning about at the moment in Science lessons. They could also explain what they had done in Science Week. They felt that they understood their lessons most or all of the time and could ask their teacher or other pupils if they had any problems.

Year 1 and 2 were particularly interested in animals – some may be aware of Jurassic Park as they seemed very interested in bringing dinosaurs and mammoths back to life! More year 2 children seemed clear on what scientists do and more of them felt like scientists during their lessons. They enjoy conducting experiments, learning about animals and drawing, though are less keen on writing in Science lessons.

Year 3 and 4 enjoyed conducting experiments: "It's cool to see the end result", outdoor activities and learning new things, especially through their own research. They generally enjoy Science lessons, although some get impatient waiting for explanations before doing their own practical work. They like doing one long lesson a week as you can do practical work as well as writing up, and there is "More time for fun stuff". At this stage they have not yet designed experiments for themselves, although some of the year 4s felt that they could do so and knew, for example, to "Only change one thing at a time".

Year 5 and 6 all reported that they enjoyed Science, particularly the practical elements but some liked doing the online research components as well (in the ICT suite particularly). Year 5 were keener on shorter lessons as they felt it gave more variety through the week, but year 6 appreciated longer lessons as it gives more time for the practical elements. They could speak about the steps required to design experiments: "Think of your idea, research the question and key facts, predict, find out how to do the experiment, get the equipment, observe the experiment, write down the outcome."

We were impressed by their knowledge and pleased by their enthusiasm for the subject.

Making the Vision Real

Building Children's Vocabulary



Building a rich vocabulary is one of the most important aspects of primary school education. The words children know help them understand what they read, explain their thinking, ask questions and succeed across the curriculum. This is not just true in English. In maths, children need words such as difference, equal and estimate. In science, they need language such as observe, predict and investigate. A strong vocabulary helps children access learning in every subject.

There is clear evidence that spoken language matters. The Education Endowment Foundation says oral language approaches have a high impact on learning, adding an average of 6 months' additional progress. We also know that the "vocabulary gap" starts early. The National Literacy Trust reports that in 2023, over 185,000 five-year-olds in England started school without the literacy, communication and language skills they needed to thrive.

But, why does this matter so much? Early language skills are closely linked to later success - evidence shows that children who struggle with language at age 5 are six times less likely to reach the expected standard in English at age 11, and 11 times less likely to reach the expected standard in maths. Another recent government review found that 23% of children who struggle with language at age 5 do not reach the expected standard in English by the end of primary school, compared with just 4% of children who had good language skills at age 5.

At school, vocabulary is built deliberately and carefully. We introduce new words in lessons, explain them clearly and return to them often. We encourage children to use ambitious vocabulary in speaking and writing, and we expose them to rich language through stories, discussion and high-quality texts. Repetition matters: children often need to hear, understand and use a word several times before it becomes part of their everyday vocabulary. We also make sure vocabulary is taught in context, so children understand not just what a word means, but how and when to use it. Examples of this are during out text mapping of new texts, through sharing stories during guided reading and looking at a new word each day as part of our Word Ninja starters. These activities will introduce new words, but allow children to try them out, experiment, make mistakes and then use them more regularly as part of their everyday language.

Parents also make a huge difference at home. One of the best ways to build vocabulary is simply to read together regularly. Storytime, shared reading and talking about books all expose children to new words. When an unfamiliar word comes up, pause briefly and explain it in a natural way. Everyday conversation matters too. Chatting at the dinner table, in the car or on a walk gives children valuable opportunities to hear and use language. Encourage your child to describe, explain, compare and retell. Rather than asking only "Did you have a good day?", try "What was the most interesting thing you learned today?" or "Can you explain how you solved that?"

A few simple habits can really help:

- read aloud often, even once children can read for themselves*
- explain new words as they arise*
- encourage full sentences rather than one-word answers*
- talk about books, television programmes and everyday experiences*
- introduce ambitious words naturally in conversation, modelling language.*

A key point is not to assume children understand words that we may see as common or well known. Ask your children if they understand the meaning of words they hear, or even words they use. They may use them incorrectly, or in the wrong context. The effort should be praised, but taking the time to correct any misconceptions and build vocabulary through these conversations is key.

Vocabulary opens doors. It helps children become confident readers, thoughtful writers and successful learners. By building language at school and at home together, we give children a foundation that supports not only their primary years, but their future qualifications, opportunities and life chances.

A Haywood