

The Spring Issue 1

2026

# The Hermitage Schools Newsletter



## A Message from Mrs Spires

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we come to the end of a busy and successful half term, I would like to thank you for your continued support at our events and from home and to celebrate the many wonderful achievements across our school.

This half term has been filled with memorable events. Bears at Bedtime and the school discos, organised by our fantastic parents within the Hermitage Schools Association (HSA), were a huge success and thoroughly enjoyed by the children. Art Week was another highlight across all year groups this half term, with the Art Gallery showcasing the children's creativity around the theme 'Flourish' at the end of the week. It was lovely to see so many parents attending and sharing in their children's pride.

We have also been delighted by the excellent attendance at class assemblies. Your presence means so much to the children and they were thrilled to share their learning and achievements with such enthusiastic audiences. Our focus on sustainability has continued with the purchasing of new bins for all rooms to increase our effective recycling. I would like to offer a huge thank you to Mr Green, a junior parent who is a waste and recycling industry and work for the West London Waste Authority, for sharing his expertise on reducing, reusing and recycling. The children gained a great deal from his visit and were inspired to think carefully about how they can look after our environment and planet by reducing pollution.

Looking ahead to Science Week, we are excited to welcome more parents who will be sharing with the children information about their careers, including biochemistry and other fields. Year 6 have been visited by Lawyers for Learning and thoroughly enjoyed participating in building cases for and against and joining a prosecution and defence team. If you would be interested in visiting the school to talk to the children in a workshop or assembly about your career, please contact the school office. These experiences are invaluable in raising aspirations and helping children understand the many possibilities open to them in the future.

Thank you, as always, for being such a supportive and engaged school community. Have a happy and healthy half term with hopefully a little less rain.

Warm regards,  
Mrs Spires

Executive Headteacher

Mrs Clare Spires -  
Executive Head Teacher  
Mrs Larsen - Infant Deputy  
Head Teacher  
Mrs Condon - Junior  
Deputy Head Teacher  
Mr Greenwood - Assistant  
Junior Deputy Head  
Teacher  
Mrs Quirk - Inclusion Lead  
Miss Foster - SENCO

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# EYFS

## Nursery and Reception

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*In Reception, the children have been exploring the topic “What was life like for your grandparents?” in a fun and meaningful way. Their learning focused on understanding what daily life was like in the past and how it compares to modern times.*

*A highlight of the half-term was a visit from Chertsey Museum. The children examined everyday objects from years gone by and learned about how homes have changed, comparing old-fashioned kitchens, bedrooms, and living spaces with the homes we have today.*

*The children also had a lovely opportunity to speak with their grandparents about their own childhoods. Bringing these stories back to school allowed them to share treasured family memories and hear first hand accounts of how people lived in earlier generations.*

*They discovered how games, food, clothing, technology, and communication have changed over the years.*

*We also celebrated Arts Week, centred around the theme Flourish. Throughout the week, the children expressed themselves creatively, exploring different materials and techniques while thinking about what it means to grow, thrive, and flourish as individuals and as a community.*

*Additionally, both year groups took part in a Life Space wellbeing workshop, where the children learned about emotional wellbeing, resilience, and how to look after themselves and others. Through interactive activities and guided discussions, they explored strategies for managing feelings and building positive relationships.*

*In Nursery, the children embarked on an engaging journey to answer the question, “How are the woods different at night time?” Through this inquiry, they learned about nocturnal animals and how they are uniquely adapted to life after dark. Using the much-loved story Owl Babies as a starting point, the children followed the tale of three young owls searching for their mother in the night time forest. This sparked thoughtful conversations about the sounds of the night, animals that wake while others sleep, and how these creatures differ from those active during the day. Role-play, creative tasks, and making their own owls helped deepen their understanding, and soon the children were confidently recognising nocturnal animals such as owls, bats, and hedgehogs.*



# Year 1



Halfway through the year already and we have had a very busy half term. Our termly topic of 'Splendid Cities' was focussed on landmarks. We have looked at the 6 types of landmarks and examples that we can find in London. We used this Geography knowledge in our own story writing, inspired by this term's text "Claude in the City" by Alex T Smith.



The children have designed city vehicles in Design and technology and have got to grips with wheels, axles and chassis! Lots of problem-solving in what is required for a successful vehicle.

Hopefully you all had a chance to enjoy our wonderful Art Exhibition this half term and seeing the lovely 'Rainbow Forests' the children created in year 1 under our school topics of 'Flourish'. They were very proud to show round their parents.

We received a visit from the SCARF Life centre where the children learnt about resilience and the power of using yet in their growth mindset. We marked 'Children's Mental health week' by wearing a scarf to show we follow our Life skills program called SCARF. The children having been finding out about maintaining a healthy body but also a healthy mind by using calming and mindfulness techniques within the classroom.



# Year 2

Year 2 have had a wonderful start to their new topic this term! The children threw themselves into Art Week with great enthusiasm, carefully designing and creating their own colourful flower artworks using card. They also had a fantastic time making challah bread, learning how to measure, pour and plait the dough with growing confidence. We have been celebrating Children's Mental Health Week too, with a calming and reflective visit to the Life Space, where the children learned about different feelings and explored ways to look after themselves when they are feeling worried or unwell. A real highlight has been reading our class text, *The Secret of Black Rock* by Joe Todd-Stanton, which has already inspired lots of curiosity and wonderful discussions. On top of all this, we are incredibly proud of every child in Year 2 for taking part in their class assemblies, each one was delivered with confidence, excitement and big smiles. It has truly been a brilliant beginning to the term!



# Year 3

In History, we travelled back in time to Ancient Egypt. The children learned about Egyptian artefacts, how life has changed from Ancient Egypt to modern day, the importance of the River Nile, and why the Ancient Egyptians preserved the dead. This topic linked beautifully with English, where the children compared Egyptian Cinderella with the traditional version of Cinderella. They took part in thoughtful discussions, confidently sharing their opinions on which version they preferred and why.

In Science, we began our new topic on Forces and Magnets, where the children discovered some fascinating facts and enjoyed exploring how forces work in the world around us.

This has been one of our busiest and most exciting terms yet in Year 3!



To bring our learning to life, we enjoyed an Ancient Egyptian workshop hosted by Haslemere Educational Museum. Everyone had a fantastic day and gained a deeper understanding of Egyptian life. We couldn't finish the term without trying our own mummification experiment – mummifying tomatoes! It was a fun, hands-on activity that the children thoroughly enjoyed and we are all very excited to see how they turn out after half term.



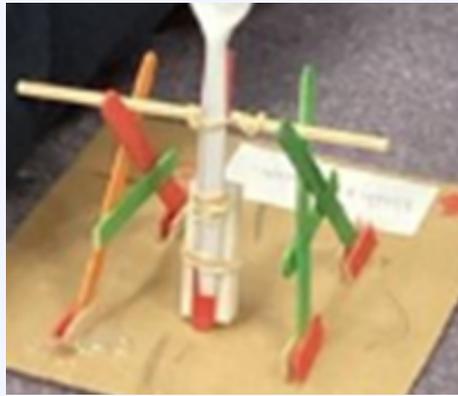
Finally, we celebrated our annual art exhibition, held across both schools. It was wonderful to see so many parents attending. We also ended the term on a positive note with Wear a Scarf Day, supporting Mental Health Week.



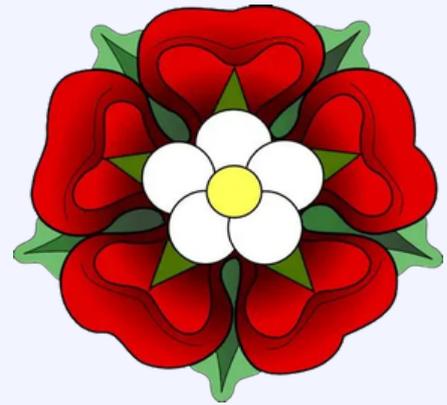
# Year 4

*Year 4 have enjoyed learning about the Romans this half term! As part of our DT project, the children designed and built their very own Roman Siege Machines. They explored how the Romans used levers, tension and clever engineering to attack enemy forts - then applied this knowledge to create their own fabulous working models.*

*They had so much fun planning, building and testing their designs. Look at the amazing creations below!*



# Year 5



It has been a busy half term in Year 5. The children have thoroughly enjoyed their learning about the Tudors, particularly exploring the fascinating life of Henry VIII. The children loved finding out about his reign, his six wives and what life was really like in Tudor times.

Alongside this, they have been busy getting creative by designing, making and sewing their own Tudor puppets, in preparation for holding their own Tudor puppet show. The finished puppets were fantastic and showed great attention to detail, patience and pride in their work. During Art Week, Year 5 truly impressed their teachers with their determination and resilience. Sculpting birds proved to be a challenge, but the children persevered brilliantly, experimenting with different techniques and refining their ideas. They also explored a range of shading techniques when shading trees.

Well done, Year 5 – a fantastic effort all round!



# Year 6



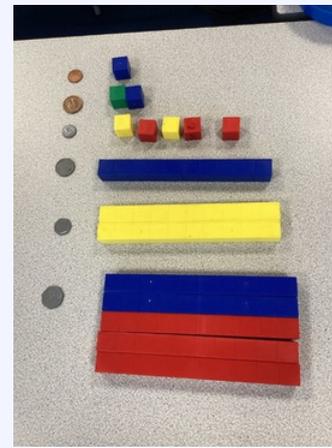
## Year 6 – Lawyers4 Learners

30 children from Year 6 have had the privilege of taking part in four fortnightly sessions with the charity Lawyers4Learners where the children put their skills to the test in a mock courtroom. Each week, the children are given a different fictional case to explore as either prosecution, defense or jury. Full of enthusiasm, the children are learning to organise and present their arguments to the jury in a clear and concise manner. The children have learnt about the rules and roles of those involved in the British court system, the need for respect for others and the importance of listening to all in order to make their own conclusions based on the evidence presented. So far our juries have found one case guilty and the other innocent. The fate of our next case, involving a vet, will be decided by the next jury. One pupil wrote “We investigated a case of a young adult who chained herself and others in the middle of the road causing immense traffic. I was part of the jury and thoroughly enjoyed it.”

Lawyers4Learners aim is to give children confidence when public speaking—empowering them with the confidence to speak clearly and effectively in any setting.



# The Orchard

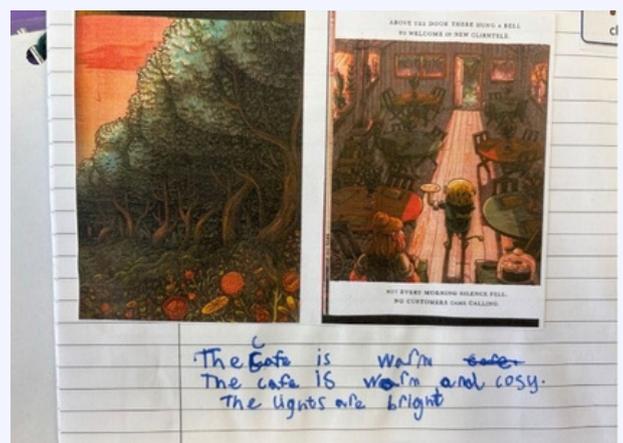
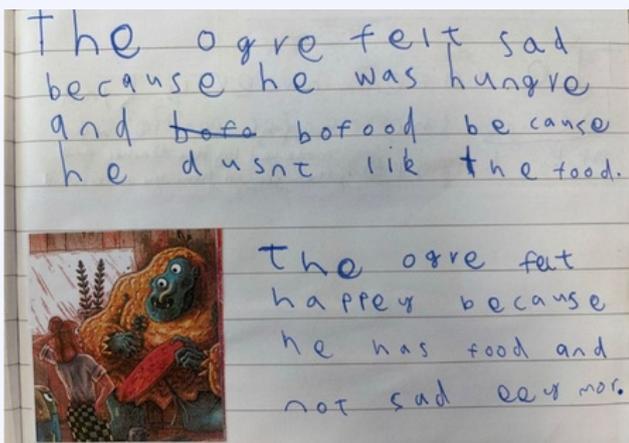


In English, we have been exploring “The Café at the Edge of the Woods” as the inspiration for our work. The children have been developing their descriptive writing skills and have planned their own stories based on the themes in the book. A big focus has been understanding how problems and solutions help shape an engaging story, and the children have produced some wonderful ideas full of adventure and surprises.



In Maths, we have been busy working on multiplication, using practical activities and visual methods to help deepen understanding. We also spent time learning about money, recognising coins and notes, adding amounts, and giving change. To bring this learning to life, the children designed and created their very own shops in the classroom. They loved taking turns being shopkeepers and customers, practising real-world maths in a fun and meaningful way.

It has been a fantastic half term, and the children should feel very proud of all their hard work!





# Sports

Despite some very challenging weather this half term, the girls have played two matches. They travelled to St George's for the quarter-final of the Surrey County Cup; a brilliant achievement in itself. Although they were narrowly defeated on the day, reaching the last eight teams in the county is something they should be incredibly proud of. The team also took to the pitch in a very wet league match at Pirbright, where their hard work paid off with an impressive 2-0 victory.



Some of our Year 5 and Year 6 children recently took part in the Sportshall Athletics competition at the Guildford Spectrum, where they competed in a wide range of both track and field events. The team showed fantastic effort, enthusiasm and teamwork throughout the afternoon. Their hard work was rewarded with a brilliant 6th place finish out of 12 schools.



# Sports

A group of eight pupils had a fantastic time representing our school at a recent Panathlon event. They took part in a wide range of activities, including the beanbag throw, bowling, curling, and several other fun challenges designed to test their skills and teamwork. The children approached every activity with enthusiasm and great sportsmanship. We were incredibly proud of the way they represented the school—supporting one another, trying their best, and celebrating each other's achievements. Their hard work and positive attitudes were recognised, and each child came back to school proudly wearing a medal.



A group of children also had the opportunity to represent the school by taking part in an exciting new age curling experience. This was a brand-new activity for many of them, and they embraced it with curiosity and enthusiasm. The afternoon was filled with fun, teamwork, and plenty of inspiring moments as the children learnt new skills and encouraged one another throughout. It was wonderful to see them trying something different and enjoying every part of the experience.



# In other news

## Breakfast and After School Clubs

In our wrap-around care provision, the children have been enjoying lots of new toys that have been kindly donated – from monster trucks to Barbie dolls, and even arts and crafts materials. Your donations help keep activities fresh and engaging for the children.

If you're thinking of having a clear-out this half term, please keep us in mind. With the better weather on the way, we are especially looking for outdoor play equipment.



## Book Celebrations

Book celebrations are taking place at the beginning of the next half term. Please check the school website for further information.

## Bounce for books

Great news! You can now make donations to our Bounce for Books fundraiser directly through Scopay. Every pound raised will help us fill our libraries with exciting new reads for the children. The main bouncing event will take place on Thursday 5th March, and we can't wait to see the children springing into action!

## Spring Reading Challenge:

The Spring Reading Challenge encourages children to read as much as they can to earn bronze, silver, and gold certificates. To achieve bronze, children need to read 12 books; to reach silver, they must read 15 more books, and for gold, an additional 18 books. The challenge will begin on 23rd February and continue until the 27th of March. Please ensure that every time your child reads, it is recorded in their reading diary, so teachers can keep an accurate count of the books completed. We hope this motivates all children to enjoy lots of wonderful reading!

## Spare Clothing – Please Return

We kindly ask parents and carers to return any spare clothing that children may have borrowed, particularly trousers or tracksuit bottoms. Our supplies are currently running low, and returning these items will help ensure we have enough for future use.

# In other news

## Infant Gates – Breakfast Club and After School Club

For the safety of all children, please ensure the Infant Gate is not propped open in the morning. The gate should only remain open when a member of staff is present to supervise.

## Teen Life

Teen Life is a six-session programme for parents/carers of autistic young people aged 10 to 16 years. The aim of the Teen Life programme is to bring parents together to share information, experiences and ideas in a structured way.

Teen Life emphasises the importance of autistic perspectives, with a variety of videos and quotes used throughout the sessions, and empowers parents to understand more about autism.

Parents can choose to attend the programme with a supporting professional.

The sessions focus on:

Understanding autism and autistic identity

Stress and anxiety

Understanding behaviour

Health and wellbeing

Puberty

Education

Transition to adulthood

## Surrey Family Learning – Who's in charge?

First steps to understanding child to parent violence

What you'll learn:

- Understand what drives aggressive behaviour
- Explore family rights, responsibilities, and dynamics
- Develop positive parenting approaches
- Create a calmer home environment

Please see attached flyer for more details

Starting on Friday 17th April for 6 weeks, 12.00 – 2.30pm at Guildford Family Centre, Hazel Avenue, Guildford GU1 1NR. PLACES MUST BE BOOKED - please email NAS to register and book a space: [Surrey.familysupport@nas.org.uk](mailto:Surrey.familysupport@nas.org.uk).

St John's Church Woking

St John's Church Brick Club

## February Half Term The Story of Jonah

We'd love families to join us for our February St John's Church Brick Club Meeting!

We'll be exploring the story of Jonah from the Bible through creative Lego builds and a short video.

**When:** Friday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2026, 10am-11:30am

**Where:** St John's Church Youth Centre (Church Road, Woking, GU21 7QN)

**Who:** For children in primary school and their grown-up!

**Children must be accompanied by an adult.**  
(Adults are encouraged to join in and play with Lego too!)

Book your place here → <https://www.stjohnswoking.uk/events>

Timetable

- 10:00 - Arrive/ Mini-builds Challenge
- 10:20 - Show Time
- 10:30 - Bible Video and Prayer
- 10:40 - Big Build
- 11:20 - Tidy Up

Free!

# Attendance

**REGISTRATION AND PUNCTUALITY** 3.1.1 Punctuality to school is crucial and registration at the beginning of the day with the class teacher is one of the most important periods in the day. Lateness to school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is paramount therefore that all children arrive at school on time.

## The Hermitage Infant School

- The Hermitage Infant School gates opens at 8.30am and close at 8:45am
- Classroom doors open at 8:40 and Registration takes place at 8:45am; students who arrive after 8:45am will be recorded as late marked with an L code (late as the register has closed).
- Morning registration will close at 9.00am. If a child arrives after this time, the lateness will be recorded as a U code (an unauthorised absence) and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.
- The Hermitage Infant School day ends at 3:10pm.

## The Hermitage Junior School

- The Hermitage Junior School opens at 8.30am and registration takes place at 8:40am; students who arrive after 8:40am will be recorded as late to school.
- If a child arrives at The Hermitage Junior School after 8.40am the parent/carer must sign in the late book to ensure their child's presence on site is noted, particularly in case of a fire drill.
- Morning registration will close at 8:55am. If a student arrives at The Hermitage Junior School after this time, the lateness will be recorded as a U code (an unauthorised absence) and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.00pm at The Hermitage Junior School.
- Lateness by a student will be dealt with through the school behavioural system and may be referred to the Surrey Attendance Service.
- The Hermitage Junior School day ends at 3:20pm.

# Attendance

## UNAUTHORISED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

6.1 The schools term dates are published a year in advance to ensure children do not miss out on their education and we strongly advise parents/carers to book any leave of absence during the school holidays. If a family leave of absence in term time is unavoidable, parents/carers should apply to the school using the 'Application for Leave of Absence' application form; however, it is no longer policy to authorise any absences due to a leave of absence being taken during term time. Some exceptional circumstances may be considered when appropriate. 6.2 We expect that pupils attend 100% of the time as per Surrey County Council's guidelines, unless the absence is authorised by the Executive Headteacher. 6.3 If a leave of absence is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. 6.4 No parents/carers can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right. 6.5 Where a child is taken out of The Hermitage Schools for a leave of absence during term time without the authority of the Executive Headteacher, each parent/carer may be liable to receive a penalty notice for each child.

7.0

## PENALTY NOTICES

7.1 The Surrey Attendance Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from The Hermitage Schools and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. For a Summary of National Changes to penalty notices coming into effect on August 19th 2024 see Appendix 3. 7.2 The payment must be made directly to the local authority. 7.3 Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks – one morning is one session. One afternoon is another session – one day is two sessions);
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil;
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution;
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate. A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day)