

The Spring Issue 2

2026

The Hermitage Schools Newsletter



A Message from Mrs Spires

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we come to the end of the second half of the spring term, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks for your continued support, encouragement and partnership. It has been a busy and productive few weeks, and it is wonderful to see our children developing their understanding of responsibility every day. This school value has been a focus this last half term with an emphasis on taking responsibility to look after ourselves, each other and our planet.

Thank You for Your Feedback

A special thank you to everyone who took the time to complete our recent parent survey (29 responses). A low response but feedback from you, our parent community is important to us and will help us shape the future of the school. This short questionnaire formed part 1 of three parents surveys. The next two will arrive in April and June this year. We are thrilled to see so many strengths highlighted – particularly the ways in which you see our school values being lived out across classrooms, playgrounds and the wider school community and how you recognise the nurturing approach of our school staff. I echo this – we really do have a great team here. Your reflections mean a great deal to us, and they help us celebrate what is working well.

We also appreciate the constructive comments shared. Communication was identified as an area where we can improve further. In response to your feedback, we are reviewing how we share information and how we ensure consistency across classrooms and year groups. We encourage all families to use:

The school website calendar for upcoming events

The school noticeboard for at-a-glance reminders

The Friday Post (parent mail) for weekly updates

Seesaw (or Tapestry for Early Years) for direct communication with teachers

We will continue working hard to ensure information is easy to retrieve and that our communication is clear, accurate and timely. We ask for all staff to respond in line with our Home-School Communication Policy and will emphasise this over the summer term. Your patience and understanding as we refine our processes are greatly appreciated.

Site Improvements

You may also have noticed that the school gates have now been repaired. Entry and exit to the site should once again feel smooth and straightforward. Thank you for your patience while we resolved these issues – we know how important a safe and efficient entry and exit is for everyone.

Our annual Groundforce morning is being held on Saturday 18th April from 9am until 12noon. We ask any keen volunteer adults and children to arrive and help us tidy up the site after a cold wet winter. We need help this year with distributing bark chippings(shovelling), sweeping, planting and weeding, digging and relocating the soil mound, moving equipment (tyres) and other tasks. Refreshments will be provided and we thank you in advance for your support.

As we head into the break, I wish all our families a restful, refreshing holiday. Thank you for everything you do to support our school community. We look forward to welcoming the children back for an exciting and joyful summer term.

Warmest wishes,

Mrs Clare 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



We recently enjoyed a very successful Science Week across the school, with both Nursery and Reception children taking part in exciting hands-on learning. This meant that this year, not only Nursery but also Reception children had the chance to dive into the fascinating world of dinosaurs. In addition, Reception had a special visit from Surrey Police, giving the children the opportunity to explore the different roles within the police force—and even take a close look at a real police car!



In Reception, the children have been exploring the topic “How Does Your Garden Grow?”, discovering the wonders of plant life. They have been busy germinating beans and planting them in soil, carefully observing each stage as their seedlings begin to grow. Through this process, the children are learning about the plant lifecycle—from seeds to sprouts—and finding out what plants need to flourish, such as sunlight, water, and minerals. These practical activities not only deepen their understanding of the natural world but also help them develop important skills such as careful observation and responsibility.



Meanwhile, in Nursery, the children have embarked on a prehistoric adventure with the theme “Were All Dinosaurs Big?” Through engaging songs, stories, and interesting dinosaur facts, they are discovering the wide variety of dinosaurs that once lived on Earth. They have learned that although some dinosaurs were enormous, others were surprisingly small. This topic encourages imagination and curiosity, as children enjoy colourful dinosaur imagery and explore the idea of size differences in the animal kingdom. Music, stories, and playful activities help make their dinosaur learning journey exciting and memorable.

Year 1



A short half term that has been jam-packed.

Book week was a great success with the children embracing the reading challenge with a great number of them achieving reading certificates. They bounced for books and made amazing booktatoes.



We had our wonderful Palaeontology themed Science week based on the “Maisie Jones and the dinosaur bones” book. We found out what a Palaeontologist does and researched fossils and dinosaurs. The children went on a dig and used tools to reveal the bones. The children prepared a perfect palaeontologist picnic and made and wrote the instructions for tasty Flapjacks and cheese straws.

We have continued our Splendid City topic from the Landmarks of London from last half term to the historical study of the Great fire of London. The children have been enthralled with the events and are very capable in explaining what happened? Why? and how we know? We have concluded our topic with an excellent trip to London, where we loved travelling by train to see the landmarks: London eye, Big Ben, the houses of parliament, the River Thames and Westminster Abbey. The children loved seeing the sights and were brilliantly behaved.



Well done Year 1, you made us proud.

Year 2

We've had a wonderfully busy and exciting half term!

Book Week brought great excitement as the children immersed themselves in stories, shared their favourite books and celebrated reading in creative ways. STEM Week was another highlight, especially with its dinosaur theme. The children were fascinated as they investigated dinosaur poo, using clues to explore the differences between carnivores, herbivores and omnivores. This sparked fantastic discussions and plenty of scientific curiosity!



Our cooking sessions were a big hit too. The children showed growing independence and teamwork while making fruit salads and cheese scones, carefully preparing their ingredients before proudly enjoying their tasty creations. These practical activities linked well with our maths learning, where we have been comparing and measuring mass, capacity and temperature. The children have also been developing their skills in using rulers and metre sticks accurately, becoming more confident in reading and recording measurements.

In English, we have been enjoying the book *Clean Up!* and using it as inspiration to write for a range of purposes. The children have been exploring new vocabulary, developing their ideas and thinking carefully about how to communicate messages in different ways.

We look forward to our next topic – Explorers of the World

Year 3



As we head towards the Summer term, it's hard to believe how quickly this term has passed. It has been a busy and exciting time, filled with lots of practical and engaging activities.

Our class text this term was Iron Man, which the children thoroughly enjoyed. They produced some fantastic work, including diary entries, news reports and poems inspired by the story.

In Science, we explored the topic of Light, while in Geography we learned about deserts. A highlight for many was designing and building survival tents using a range of materials, then carefully rebuilding them to match their original designs. The children showed great focus and determination. During Science Week, they also took part in fun experiments, including designing paper boats to see how many objects they could hold before sinking, testing them in a paddling pool made it even more exciting!

We were incredibly proud of the children's efforts in the Spring Celebration Assembly. They worked very hard to learn their lines and songs and their performance was wonderful.

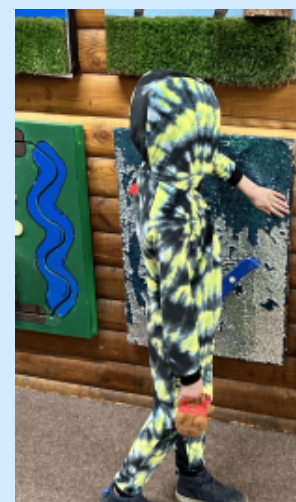
We are now looking forward to the Easter holidays and can't wait to share more of our learning with you next term.

Year 4

Last week, Year 4 went on an exciting three-day residential trip to Hindleap Warren.

Both children and adults had a fantastic time participating in a variety of outdoor activities, including a thrilling night-time campfire and an adventurous mud walk that left everyone delightfully muddy! The children fully embraced the challenges, taking part in archery and axe throwing, scaling the climbing tower, navigating an air obstacle course and engaging in team-building activities.

It was a truly memorable experience for all!



Year 5

It has been a busy half term for Year 5.

The children threw themselves into World Book Day with huge smiles and even bigger creativity.

Designing their own book front covers was a real highlight, they showed off impressive artistic flair and thoughtful ideas about what makes a story leap off the shelf. Spending the day in their cosy pyjamas added an extra layer of fun, making the classroom feel like the perfect place to curl up with a good book. In English, the class have been sharpening their descriptive vocabulary while exploring the mysterious and menacing character of Mr Hyde. Their writing has been fantastic, full of vivid imagery, powerful adjectives, and spiningling detail. It's been wonderful to see them push their language choices to create atmosphere and tension.

Science Week gave Year 5 the chance to put their investigative skills to the test. From hands-on experiments to curious questioning, they embraced every challenge with excitement. Their teamwork, problemsolving, and scientific thinking shone through as they explored the world like true young scientists.

We look forward to what the summer term will bring.



Year 6



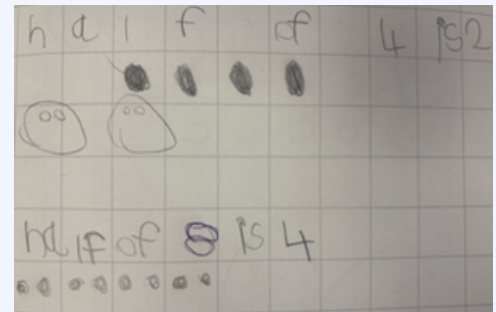
This half term, Year 6 have been learning about light. They have completed a quiz board about luminous and non-luminous objects and have learnt about how we see objects. They now know that the moon isn't luminous and that you cannot see a white cat in a cave with no light source.

They have also conducted a shadow experiment. The question to investigate was: How does the distance between an object and a surface affect the size of the shadow? They learnt that as the distance increased so did the length of the shadow.

In science week, the children did a carousel of activities which included making a floating boat, making and flying paper planes and dropping buttered toast from various heights to see which way it would land.



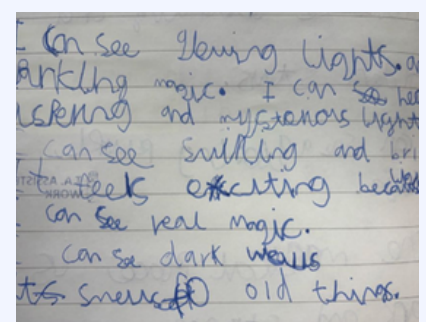
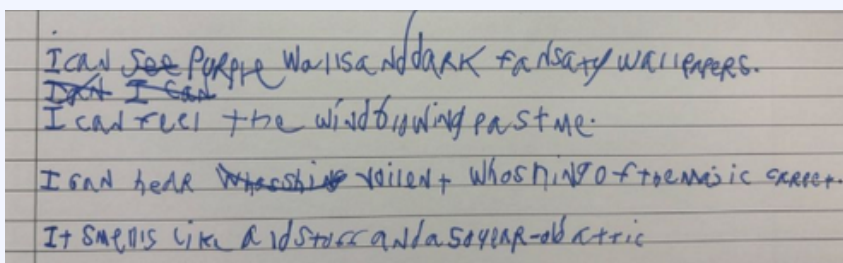
The Orchard



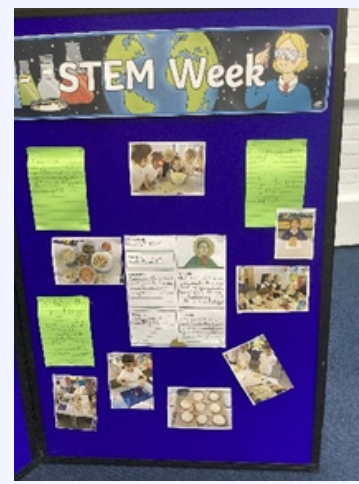
In Maths, we have been exploring sharing and grouping to deepen our understanding of multiplication and division. The children have become confident with creating equal groups and have also been working hard on improving the presentation of their written work. Another group has been learning about length and fractions, using practical activities to help compare measurements and understand how wholes can be divided into equal parts. We had a fantastic time celebrating Science Week! The children were captivated by our investigations, especially when we made bubbles bigger than our faces and explored how to make objects move without even touching them. Their excitement and curiosity filled the classroom and made it a truly memorable week of discovery.



In English, we have been diving into the enchanting world of Leon and the Place Between, using the story as a springboard to create our own magical settings and imaginative characters. The children have been exploring how authors help us understand what a character is feeling, and we've had thoughtful discussions about why Leon is brave and the clues in the text that show this.



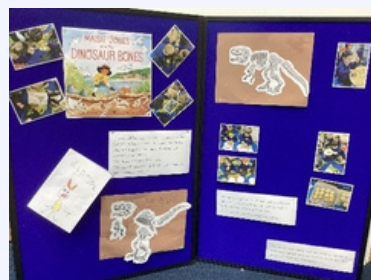
STEM week at the Hermitage Infants



Last week the Infant School celebrated STEM week, which focused on the Science and (food) Technology areas of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths.

Our learning was all based on the book 'Maisie Jones and the Dinosaur Bones' by Lily Murray. The book explores the life of one of our most important fossil hunters, Mary Anning. The children were encouraged to be curious about fossils and dinosaurs while developing their Science skills of researching, observing, sorting and grouping and measuring. Children in Year 2 excavated bones from 'dinosaur poo' and learnt about what dinosaurs eat. In Year 1, children learnt what a paleontologist needs to do their job and in the Early Years dinosaur hunts for puzzle pieces and creating dinosaur skeletons were popular activities.

In the food technology lessons, children developed their cooking skills to make cheese scones, flapjacks and biscuits. The taste tests were a highlight of the week and it was a pleasure to see children enjoying their dishes.



Following on from this, on Tuesday six children from Year 2 joined myself and Miss Boosey for a STEM afternoon at Beaufort Primary School. We joined Year 1 and 2 children from other schools in the Swan trust to see who could make the strongest bridge using raw spaghetti and tape.

The children were a credit to the school and displayed all our values. It was a draw as all the bridges stayed standing and held 800 paper clips and 48 rubbers in small buckets. The children were proud of their Science star badges and gold 'winner' stickers – well done!



STEM week at the Hermitage Juniors



Science Week was a celebration of curiosity, discovery, and hands-on exploration. Pupils investigated big questions through many experiments—testing whether toast really lands butter-side down, designing paper boats to see which could float, and engineering paper airplanes to glide the furthest. They experimented with bubbles, explored kinetic and potential energy using dominoes, and watched exciting reactions while making snow fluff. The week was made even more inspiring by special visitors working in science careers, who shared their expertise and answered the children's thoughtful, insightful questions. It was a joyful reminder that curiosity is the spark that drives all scientific learning.



During our STEM morning, on Tuesday 17th March, eight of our enthusiastic children took part in a challenge with other Swan Trust schools. They had to design and test their own paper helicopters, all aiming to create the slowest, most graceful descent. The room buzzed with teamwork, problem-solving, and plenty of trial and error as the young engineers refined their designs. Our school's team entry soared to victory, but every participant shone—showing curiosity, creativity, and real determination. The children were outstanding ambassadors for our school. Well Done!



Sports

Congratulations to our year 5 and 6 and year 3 and 4 Cross Country teams for a fantastic effort at their recent races. The children have been training hard and should all be very proud of their performances!



Our year 6 boys' team have also played a fixture against Knaphill. The boys showed the school values throughout the game and battled hard. With two excellent goals and brilliant tackles they won 2-0.



Our year 5 boys' football team put on an excellent display against Knaphill. They played some brilliant passing football and were unfortunate to concede two late goals. After a tough game it finished 3-1.

Our girls' team have had a busy half term with two fixtures. In both games the girls showed determination and excellent teamwork to win 10-0 and 6-0. With some exceptional goals and good football, the girls have had a very successful half term.



In other news

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Some of your Year 6 students recently participated in Lawyers4Learners public speaking workshops. They have had a chance to learn and improve their negotiating, debating, critical thinking and public speaking skills. These skills are incredibly beneficial for children's confidence and help in future education and employment. The workshops take the form of mock trials on current affairs topics like climate change and graffiti.

The workshops themselves are delivered by volunteers and we are looking to see if anyone in our community is interested in helping with future sessions? Each session lasts one hour, and volunteers will be asked to commit to between two and four sessions spaced over the course of a term. We will provide all the resources and full training.

You will also need to get a DBS check.

We are looking for professionals, both from the legal field and otherwise, to volunteer. If you are interested please contact Louise from Lawyers4Learners at louise@lawyers4learners.co.uk.

Thank you for your consideration, Louise.



Dear Parent,

The London TKD School Clubs are an exciting children's martial arts programme at the cutting edge of character building and life skills development.

Throughout the term, students will learn a variety of self-defence techniques, specifically designed for realistic situations that children find themselves in.

These classes also help develop a positive attitude through learning, meditation, mindfulness and confidence building exercises.

How to get started?

Simply scan the QR code, or visit our website and select "**Get Started**", then follow through the booking instructions to select your school and start date.



Once you have booked, your child's name and details will be added to our coaches register ready for their first class.

With our special joining offer you will be charged **£10 for 2 weeks** and then the ongoing classes are **£10.50** weekly.

What does my child need to wear and bring?

Please wear some comfortable, loose fitted clothing (PE kit) and bring along a bottle of water.

Attendance

Attendance, Registration & Punctuality

Arriving at school on time is essential. Being late disrupts learning for both the child and the class. Please ensure your child arrives promptly each day.

Hermitage Infant School

- Gates open **8:30am** and close **8:45am**.
- Classroom doors open **8:40am**; **registration is at 8:45am**.
- Arrival after **8:45am** = **Late (L code)**.
- Arrival after **9:00am** = **Unauthorised Late (U code)**.
- Persistent lateness may be referred to the Surrey Attendance Service.
- School finishes at **3:10pm**.

Hermitage Junior School

- School opens **8:30am**; **registration is at 8:40am**.
- Arrival after **8:40am** = **late (L Code)**.
- Arrival after **8:55am** = **Unauthorised Late (U code)**.
- Persistent lateness may be referred to the Surrey Attendance Service.
- School finishes at **3:20pm**.

Attendance & Leave of Absence

- Term dates are published a year in advance—please book holidays outside term time.
- Leave of absence during term time is **not normally authorised**. Exceptional circumstances may be considered.
- Unauthorised leave may result in a **penalty notice** issued by Surrey County Council.

Penalty notices may be issued where:

- A child has **10 sessions (5 days)** of unauthorised absence in 10 school weeks.
- Absence patterns do not improve after support.
- A child is in a public place during the first 5 days of a suspension without valid reason.

Thank you for your continued support in ensuring excellent attendance and punctuality. Working together helps give every child the best possible start to their day and their learning.