



Roots to grow,
Wings to soar

Newsletter

Spring Term

6th March 2026

FROM THE HEADTEACHER

Value: Forgiveness

Dear Parents and Carers,

World Book Day

It has been a busy week in school with the highlight being World Book Day on Thursday. It was a day filled with a focus on reading for pleasure, talking about books, sharing reading together across the school and creative activities such as making corner bookmarks and designing book covers. The children and adults came dressed in a fabulous display of their favourite book characters and we had a parade outside in the sunshine of all the costumes. We also had wonderful display of wooden spoon characters which are going on display in school, so a huge thank you to you all for all your efforts in supporting the day and making it so successful, as these are the days which children remember for years to come.

Whole Class Reading

As part of informing you about teaching and learning more over the next few weeks, I felt it would be helpful to explain how reading is taught across the school. More insight will be given into this at the parents reading information session. You will all be aware that from Reception to the end of KS2, reading is taught daily using the Little Wandle phonics scheme. The scheme develops children's understanding of decoding, segmenting and blending words and is the start of building stamina for reading and fluency. As children start in Year 3 and across all KS2 classes, children also have a daily 30 – 45-minute reading lesson which builds on from phonics and embeds a range of skills that continue to develop fluency, vocabulary and understanding. Teachers use a range of texts which may be linked to a current topic (History, Geography, Science) ensuring that a variety of text types are used, be that fiction, non-fiction and genres (persuasive, information, newspaper reports etc.) The skills used in reading lessons are then linked and embedded within the teaching of writing.

One text is used over a 3-day cycle:

Day 1 – Teacher models the read, children highlight new and unfamiliar words, vocabulary is discussed and understood, and dual coding (image and word together) helps embed new learning.

Day 2 – Teacher reads text again, a range of strategies are used for children to read through, first set of VIPERS questions, challenge questions planned for and self-assessment.

Day 3 – Text is read again for fluency, children read aloud as partners, whole class etc. and second set of VIPERS questions with challenge and extension questions planned for, self-assessment.

VIPERS – Vocabulary, Inference, Prediction, Explain, Retrieval, Summarise / Sequence

The six domains focus on the comprehension aspect of reading on top of decoding and prosody. They allow the teacher to track the type of questions asked and the children's responses to these which allows for targeted questioning afterwards.

The above helps to build confidence, stamina and fluency in children's reading. Having spent three days on the same text, as the children become more confident in seeing it, it then allows fluency and comprehension to build. Exposure to new and unfamiliar vocabulary and how to decode and use etymology to support them with this, builds as they move through KS2.

Vocabulary

Infer

Predict

Explain

Retrieve

Summarise

READING VIPERS

Vocabulary

Find and explain meaning of words in context

- What do the words and suggest about the character, setting and mood?
- Which word tells you that.....?
- Which keyword tells you about the character/setting/mood?
- Find one word in the text which means.....
- Find and highlight the word that is closest in meaning to.....
- Find a word or phrase which shows/suggests that.....

READING VIPERS

Explain

> Explain how content is related and contributes to the meaning
> Explain how meaning is enhanced through choice of language.
> Explain the themes and patterns that develop across the text.
> Explain how information contributes to the overall experience.

- Why is the text arranged in this way?
- What structures has the author used?
- What is the purpose of this text feature?
- Is the use of effective?
- The mood of the character changes throughout the text. Find and copy the phrases which show this.
- What is the author's point of view?
- What affect does have on the audience?
- How does the author engage the reader here?
- Which words and phrases did effectively?
- Which section was the most interesting/exciting part?
- How are these sections linked?

Unit 10: The Ancient Egyptians
 Text Focus: Information Text

STAGE 3

Important Animals

The Ancient Egyptians loved animals. They worshipped them, kept them as pets and feared them. Lots of animals had strengths that the Egyptians admired. These might have been strength or beauty, or the ability to ward off predators. This meant that lots of Egyptian gods were shown to look like animals.

Cats

Cats were one of the most important animals in Egypt. They were drawn in tombs as long as 4,500 years ago. We can see from these pictures that they were domesticated (kept as pets). Some even show them sitting underneath their owner's chairs. Even back then, cats had their feet under the table! Mummified cats have been found in important tombs as well. It is also possible that cats were kept to hunt pests like mice and rats.

The Egyptian's loved cats so much that they worshipped them. Bastet was known as a god who protected children. In drawings, she often had the head of a cat or lion. Most gods who were part-cat were female, but there was one male cat-god. He (Ra) was a sun-god who often fought against Apophis.

Sacred Ibis

A sacred ibis is a type of bird that was common along the Nile. The Ancient Egyptians worshipped them for thousands of years. It is thought that they worshipped them from around 5,300 BCE. Even the Romans carried on the practice of worshipping them. They were raised in captivity by the Egyptians as well. Unfortunately, the sacred ibis is now extinct in Egypt.

Ibis birds also appeared in the Egyptian hieroglyphic language. An ibis on a perch was the symbol for the god Thoth. He was the god of knowledge. Thoth was always shown with the body of a man and the head of an ibis. As the god of writing and knowledge, Thoth was present at the weighing of the soul with Anubis.

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RETRIEVAL FOCUS

1. Which god protected children?
2. When did the Egyptians start worshipping the ibis?
3. Which god was represented by an ibis?
4. What is the most deadly animal in Africa?
5. Which animal is now extinct in Egypt?

VIPERS QUESTIONS

I Why might an Egyptian have worshipped Sobek?

V Find and copy a word that tells you the Egyptians were scared of crocodiles.

I What evidence is there that cats were allowed into Egyptian homes?

S Why was Taweret made up of a lion, hippo and crocodile?

S How has Taweret's reputation changed since Ancient Egypt?

Crocodiles

Crocodiles are one of the most dangerous animals on the Nile, and the Egyptians feared them. Just like other dangerous creatures, the Egyptians worshipped them. The god Sobek had the body of a man and the head of a crocodile. He was worshipped as the god of the waters. Egyptians hoped that by praying to Sobek, they would be kept safe around the water.

Hippopotamus

You may not know it, but hippos are the most deadly animal in Africa. The Egyptians certainly knew it and worshipped them regularly. The goddess of motherhood and protection had the body of a hippo, the legs of a lion and the face of a crocodile. These three animals represented the most fearsome and protective animals that the Egyptians knew. She may not be well-known now, but Taweret was one of the most worshipped gods at the time.

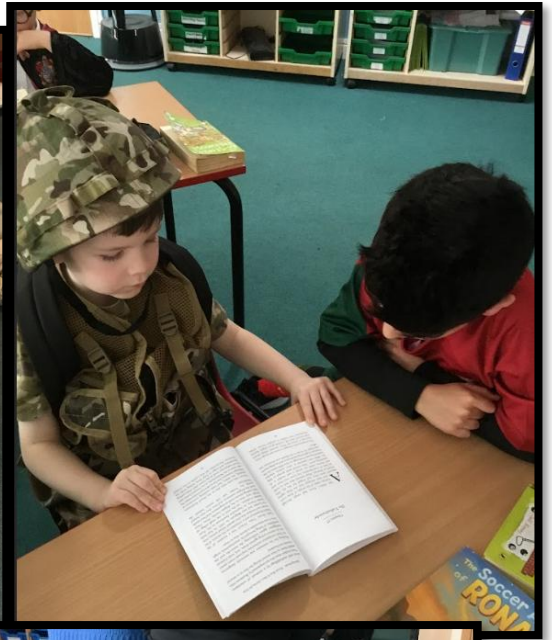
Above is an example of a Year 3 and 4 text with the questions alongside. Please do ask your child about their Whole Class Reading lessons in school. This approach has much to offer children. It enables teachers to work directly with the whole class at the same time, and it enables children in the class to experience a wide range of texts pitched at their age-group leading to strong end of KS2 outcomes.

Wishing everyone a lovely weekend,

Sarah Cook
 Headteacher







New Events – save the dates!

We will be launching **Maths Homework Workshops** after school on Mondays, beginning on **Monday 2nd March from 3:30–4:15pm in the school hall**, led by Ms Todd and myself. These sessions are designed to support families with maths strategies and homework approaches with an opportunity for you to ask how we teach maths, as for many of us the way in which we were taught at school is very different to how we teach your children today. Please do come along with your child and their homework book to work together – we look forward to seeing many of you there.

Tuesday 10th March

We welcome you to come and join us at 3.30pm in the school hall for a **Parents Information Session** with a focus on **Teaching and Learning approaches** at Furneux Pelham School. The session will reflect on how children learn from EYFS through to Year 6 and will consider the ways in which parents and school can work together to ensure that all children are able to thrive. We will also share with you how the curriculum is delivered and strategies which are in place but also what our school development plan is working on this year to improve outcomes for pupils.

Tuesday 17th March

Our second information session for parents this half term will be on **Reading**. As one of the most important areas of learning, this session will look at the importance of early reading, Little Wandle Phonics, how reading is taught across KS2 and the importance of parental involvement alongside school and strategies for home to support your child on their reading journey across the school. This session is a **'must'** for parents of children in all year groups and we would welcome as many of you to attend as possible.

Tuesday 21st April

Writing and all the many elements within the teaching of this subject will be the focus for a Parents Information Session to be held in the school hall at 3.30pm on Tuesday 21st April. The session will explain how writing is taught across the school, highlight the national curriculum requirements across the year groups, look at how it is assessed by teaching staff and talk you through what an English writing unit looks like, and the scheme we use. Alongside reading, writing is a key life skill, and we would like to support you in ways in which activities at home can help support your child in writing at school.

Woodpecker Class This week we have been learning about odd and even numbers. The children explored different numbers using practical resources and worked hard to sort them into odd and even groups. We discovered that they follow a pattern –even, odd, even, odd – all the way along the number line! The children were very proud of themselves when they spotted this pattern independently. Outside, the children have been busy designing and building their own obstacle courses. They worked brilliantly together, sharing ideas and solving problems as a team. It was wonderful to see their creativity and determination as they adjusted their courses to make them even better. We were especially proud of how kind and supportive they were, helping some of the younger children to cross safely and cheering each other on. Such lovely teamwork and encouragement! There has been lots of excitement building up to World Book Day! We have been exploring a wide range of different books and sharing our favourites with one another. The children have enjoyed listening to stories, talking about characters, and discussing what might happen next.

Kingfisher Class We've had a busy week in Kingfisher. It feels like Spring has finally sprung and we chose this week to plant our potatoes during Forest School, as well as brighten up our outside area with some chalk art. Following on from our Fairy Tale topic in English we are now 'Making connections' in science we have been comparing the hare and the tortoise in an animal race. We started with the 'Question' ... Do all animals move at the same speed? We then 'observed, tested and measured' and 'concluded' that the hare was 144 times quicker than a tortoise over a short distance. But as we all know, the result might well have been different if the race had been longer and the hare needed a snooze!

Nightingale Class have been mastering how to write direct speech in stories. They have been inspired by our circus story, Leon and the Place Between, which has lots of dialogue. They have been imagining how the conversation might continue and how to punctuate this accurately in a story. In maths they have been learning lots of new vocabulary related to fractions, working out their numerators from their denominators and unit fractions from non-unit fractions! We have been imaging lots of real-life examples of dividing pizzas and chocolate bar to understand that the bigger the denominator the smaller the share. In Science we have been building circuits using batteries, wires, crocodile clips and bulbs. The children were careful to make sure there were no gaps and all the wires connected. You could see their sense of achievement when the lights went on. We had a fantastic day on Thursday on World Book Day. It was lovely to

see them all dressed up as book characters and sharing their favourite books. As well as sharing classics such as Paddington and Narnia, the children were introduced to some new stories as well.

Robin Class have been looking at converting mixed numbers to improper fractions and vice versa. The children have been working hard to use their multiplication and division knowledge to help them with this. On Tuesday, we explored the natural artwork of Andy Goldsworthy and then went outside to create our own pieces. The children worked brilliantly as a team and used the natural resources on the field to build some beautiful sculptures in the outdoor setting. In Geography, we investigated where Antarctica is located and what the climate is like there. We looked at The Antarctic Treaty which focuses on peace and allowing countries to work together to study and preserve the environment. The children were pleased to discover that the animals are protected. To celebrate World Book Day, we invited Kingfisher Class to join us for some shared reading. It was lots of fun and the children enjoyed practising their fluency and expression while reading together.

Skylark Class We have continued enjoying our model texts in English and have been exploring grammar and language choices suitable for non-chronological reports. The children created some super sentences using brackets for parenthesis to provide their readers with extra information. In Science, we started our topic on the 'Human Timeline' and enjoyed watching a couple of fascinating time-lapse videos showing the changes in two children from ages 0 to 18. We also had a great class discussion about the different developmental milestones and skills that we achieve at different stages of our lives. In RE this half term, we are exploring 'Salvation' in Christianity and enjoyed revisiting our previous learning about the ideas of resurrection and salvation and the events in the Easter Story.

WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Attendance this week

96.22%

Whole School Target Set – 96%

Please contact school **every day** of any absence. This can be done by calling **01279 777344** and leaving a message on the absence line.

If you are going to be late and will need to order a school lunch, you can either make your own selection on Arbor before 8.15 am or ring the school office before 9.15 am. Any orders placed after this time may not be accepted.

BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK



Woodpecker
Jay

Kingfisher
Hadley
Emilia



Nightingale
Carris
Darcey

ABOVE AND BEYOND AWARDS

Woodpecker

Oliver O'H for fantastic listening.
Felicity for trying hard with her reading.

Nightingale

Lucas has shown great enthusiasm for our new topics especially Electricity in Science and Fractions in Maths, putting his hand up and applying his understanding well.

Kingfisher

Sky for her focus and contribution in our daily phonics session. She is a great role model to all the class.

Emma for her wonderfully entertaining research into moles for our current English topic. She always remembers to inform and entertain the reader.

Robin

Lacey for being an encouraging and kind friend to those in need and working hard with her reading.

Skylark

William for super progress with his handwriting and presentation.

Bertie for fantastic focus and effort in English writing lessons.

HEADTEACHER AWARDS

Carris for incredible work in maths on fractions this week.
Eddie for achieving a Distinction in his Grade 1 in piano.

READING AWARDS

Woodpecker
Jay

Nightingale
Myles

Kingfisher
Margaux

Robin
Oliver K

Skylark
Eddie

TIMES TABLES ROCKSTAR AWARD

Ada for improved recall reflected by her great perseverance.

MENU w/c 9th March 2026		DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES	
Day	Menu		
Monday	Beef Bolognese (Red) Plant Based Grill (Ve) (Green) Baked Potato with Grated Cheese (v) (Blue)	Every Monday	Maths Homework Club 3.30 – 4.15pm
		Monday 9 th March	Bags to School Collection
		Tuesday 10 th March	Parents Information Session 3.30pm Hall: Teaching and Learning
		Thursday 12 th March	Collective Worship St. Mary's Church 1pm – parents welcome to join
Tuesday	Breaded Chicken Katsu Curry (Red) Cheese Pinwheel (v) (Green) Baked Potato with Tuna Mayo (Blue)	Friday 13 th March	Y6 Health Questionnaires
		Tuesday 17 th March	Parents Information Session 3.30pm Hall: Reading
		Friday 20 th March	Red Nose Day
		Thursday 26 th March	Easter Service St. Mary's Church
Wednesday	Roast Chicken with Stuffing & Gravy (Red) Plant Based Sausages & Gravy (Ve) (Green) Baked Potato with Baked Beans (v) (Blue)	Thursday 26 th March	FPSA Easter Disco
		Friday 27 th March	End of Term
		Monday 13 th April	INSET DAY
		Tuesday 14 th April	Term starts for pupils
		Tuesday 21 st April	Parents Information Session 3.30pm Hall: Writing
		Monday 27 th April	School Photos
Thursday	Quorn Burger (v) (Red) Vegetarian Lasagne (v) (Green) Baked Potato with Cheese & Beans (v) (Blue)	Monday 4 th May	Bank Holiday
		Monday 11 th May	SATs Week Year 6
		Monday 18 th May	Skylark Activity Week
		Tuesday 19 th May	Crucial Crew
		Mon 25 th – Fri 29 th May	Half Term
Friday	Battered Fish Fillet (Red) Margherita Pizza (v) (Green) Baked Potato with Grated Cheese (v) (Blue)	Wednesday 3 rd June	Bags2 School Collection
		Wednesday 24 th June	Sports Day
		Wednesday 1 st July	Reserve Sports Day
		Tuesday 7 th July	KS2 Faith Tour
		Monday 20 th July	FPSA Summer Disco
		Tuesday 21 st July	Leavers Service 2pm Church
		Wednesday 22 nd July	END of TERM
		Thursday 23 rd July	INSET DAY

NOTICES AND INFORMATION

FREE BIKE REPAIRS

DROP IN OR BOOK A SLOT AT
WWW.DR-BIKE.CO.UK/BOOK-A-SERVICE-CONTACT/

STEVENAGE - SAT 28 MARCH 10-5

WARE - SAT 25 APRIL 10-5

WGC - SAT 23 MAY 10-5

WARE - SAT 27 JUNE 10-5

STEVENAGE - SAT 25 JULY 10-5

WGC - SAT 8 AUG 10-5



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easter at church farm

28th March – 12th April

Visit Church Farm Ardeley
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Easter Farm Day Pass Includes: Easter Themed Activity Book Woodland Play Area Easter Bunny Riddle Trail Farm Bingo & spot the Easter Bunny See the Lambs, Rabbits & Farm animals Walk around the farm	Additional Activities Meet the Easter Bunny Easter Egg Hunt Lamb Bottle Feeding Goat Walking Tractor & Trailer Rides Fairy Trail
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Book online www.churchfarmardeley.co.uk

DSPL3 Parent Coffee Morning, 18th March, St Catherines School, Ware, SG12 0AW



10.00 - 11.30



You are invited to a relaxed and supportive coffee morning designed to offer valuable information and networking opportunities. Connect with other parents and carers, Share experiences and gain insights into various topics that matter to you. We offer Practical advice & emotional support Meet and chat with others in a similar situation. Bring any questions or topics you'd like to discuss. Professionals in attendance including Early Years, Outreach, Family Support, Behaviour Support, DSPL, ADD Vance and Angels. We look forward to seeing you there and fostering a strong, supportive community together!



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We offer a support service to vulnerable children and their families in your school, helping them through some of life's tough challenges. We aim to remove barriers to education and wellbeing.

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