Weekly Learning Update

6th November 2026



Nursery



What an exciting start to our new half-term topic Nursery have had! The children have enjoyed beginning our new English focus book, *Each Peach Pear Plum* by Janet and Allan Ahlberg. This familiar story works like a game of "I Spy", helping children discover where different characters are hidden. Many of the characters come from traditional tales and nursery rhymes, providing us with wonderful opportunities to make links to other stories and learning experiences.

English: This week, our small group sessions have focused on learning and using positional language, including words such as *on, in, under* and *behind*. The children have enjoyed searching for characters in the story and describing where they can be found using these key vocabulary words.

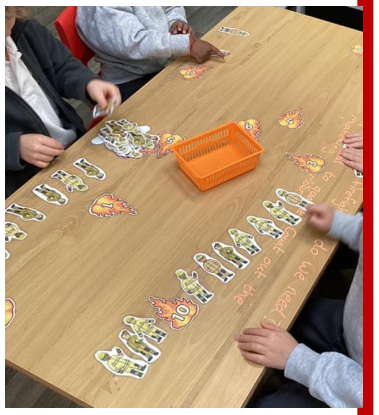


This week, our learning has also had a strong focus on Bonfire Night and Diwali. Through our activities, the children have explored celebrations, fire safety and the important role of people who help us, including firefighters.

The children have been busy exploring all areas of our Nursery provision!

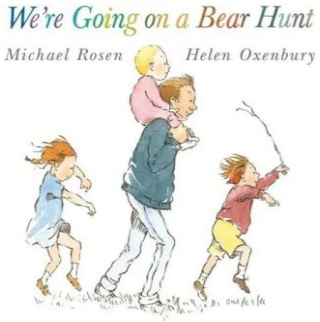


Maths: The children have been counting firefighters and matching them to the correct numbered fires, developing their counting skills and number recognition while making links to our Bonfire Night and fire safety theme.
Writing and Fine Motor: The children have been using paintbrushes to create different lines and patterns in trays of glitter, representing fireworks. This has been a fantastic way to develop mark-making and early writing skills while exploring our Bonfire Night theme.
Role Play: We have introduced a brand new restaurant role play area. The children have loved taking turns to be customers, waiters and chefs. Our chefs have enjoyed wearing the new chef hat and apron, while customers have been choosing items from the menus and sitting together at the tables.
Sensory Area: The children have been exploring coloured rice and creating Rangoli patterns to celebrate Diwali. They carefully filled different sections of the patterns with rice, developing their fine motor skills and learning about a special celebration.
Investigation Area: We have been investigating different animal footprints by printing the feet of toy animals using paint. The children enjoyed comparing the different prints and discussing which animal had made each one.
Creative Area: The children have been creating firework pictures by printing with cut-up cardboard tubes on black paper. They experimented with different colours and patterns to create their own dazzling displays.
Outdoors: Outdoors continues to be full of busy learning opportunities. The children have enjoyed large construction play, using the mechanic car and performing on our stage area. We have also introduced a *Three Little Pigs* themed small world area and a fruit-sorting activity where children sort toy fruits by colour and place them into a pie dish, linking to the pie featured in our new story.



Home Learning Suggestion: Read your favourite book together at home! It might be one of the traditional tales featured in *Each Peach Pear Plum*, or perhaps a story that is special to your family. We would love to hear all about your favourite books!

Reception (King Class and Parks Class)



It has been a fantastic first week back within Reception, the children have returned with a renewed eagerness to learn. We have also welcomed some new children within our classrooms.

English:
We began our new topic this half term by introducing our key text, 'We're Going On a Bear Hunt' by Michael Rosen. The children have enjoyed reading the story, creating actions to support retelling it and began a story map this week. We have also been writing sentences linked elements of the story.

Phonics:
We have begun retrieving phase 2 phonemes, after the initial teaching of them last half term. As we go through the phase 2 phoneme set again this half term, we will be providing the books that support teaching phase 2. The purpose of these books, second time round is to support confidence with blending and fluency within reading. There are comprehension questions within the books as well, which can offer a further stretch and challenge whilst hearing your child read at home.

Maths:
We have been exploring matching numerals to quantity within 20 this week. There has been lots of yummy learning this week, as discussed with the children anything could be used to match a quantity to a numeral... including biscuits! The children enjoyed counting out a range of concrete resources with numerals within 20, consolidating their touch counting and subitising skills.

Reader 1

Phase 2

tap



Year 1 (Bell Class and Windsor Class)



What a lovely week back we have had in Year 1!

In Phonics, we have started Phase 4 and have been focusing on blending words containing CCVC words. Ask your child if they can tell you what CCVC stands for! The children have been working hard to apply their phonics knowledge when reading and spelling more complex words.

In English, we have started our new text, Rapunzel, which the children are already loving. We have explored lots of exciting new vocabulary from the story and have used this to help us write a character description of Rapunzel. The children chose their own adjectives to make their writing more interesting while also remembering all the important features needed for a sentence.

In Maths, the children have been learning how to systematically find number bonds and use a part-whole model. This has helped them understand how numbers can be split into different parts and supports their addition and subtraction number sentences.

In Art, we have started our new unit on Environmental Art. This week, the children completed an observational drawing of a butterfly, taking time to carefully look at shapes and patterns to add detail to their work.

Reminder

A homework message has been sent out. The children should have brought home their reading folders, including a new phonics reading book and a library book. Please try to prioritise reading at home where possible, as this makes such a difference to children's progress and confidence.



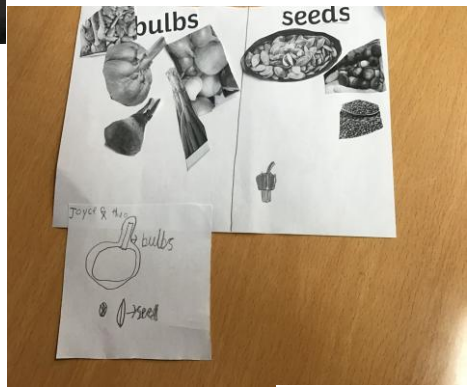
Year 2 (Braille Class and Kerr Class)

It has been a fantastic first week back, and the children have made a wonderful start to their learning.





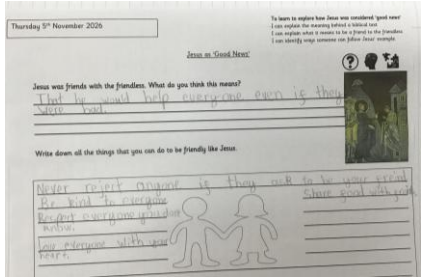
This week, in Science, we began our new unit on Plants. We learned about seeds and bulbs and compared their similarities and differences. The children sorted images of plants, seeds and bulbs, discussing what they noticed and explaining their thinking. They showed great curiosity and enthusiasm for the topic, and we are looking forward to developing our knowledge further over the coming weeks.



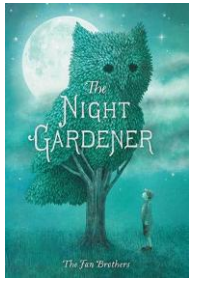
Our new big question in RE is: "What good news does Jesus bring?" We explored a Biblical text from Matthew which showed that Jesus was a friend to the friendless. We reflected on what this means and discussed how we can follow Jesus' example in our everyday lives by showing kindness, friendship and compassion to others.



This week, the children became history detectives! Without being told what our new topic was, they had to work together to solve a series of clues, including pictures of a barrel and a crown, a secret message that read 5th November, and letters that needed rearranging to spell the word plot. From these clues, the children discovered that our new topic is The Gunpowder Plot. They are already full of excitement and have generated lots of thoughtful questions that we hope to answer throughout our learning this term.



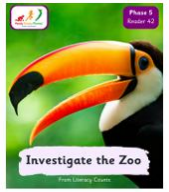
In English, we were introduced to our beautiful new text, The Night Gardener. The children examined clues and illustrations from the book and made predictions about what the story might be about. They shared some fantastic ideas and demonstrated excellent reasoning skills. We are very excited to delve deeper into the text and, later in the unit, write our own narratives inspired by the story.



Reader 42

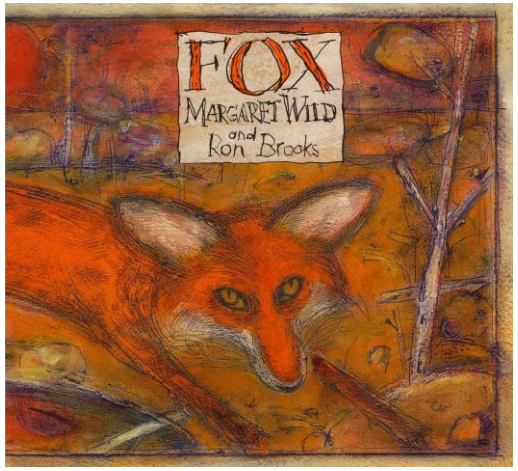
Phase 5

Investigate the Zoo



We have had a wonderful start to the term and are looking forward to all the exciting learning that lies ahead.

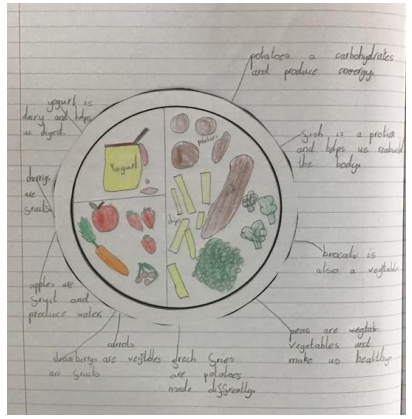
Year 3 (Malala Class and Anning Class)



We have had a great first week back after half term and the children have settled straight back into their learning with enthusiasm.

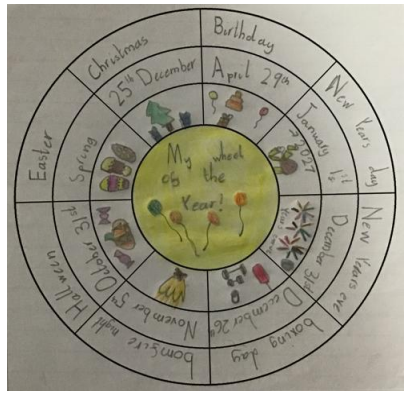
We started the half term with a surprise discovery in the classroom: charred sticks and feathers scattered around the room. These clues sparked lots of discussion and curiosity about our new class text, *Fox* by Margaret Wild. The children made thoughtful predictions about the story, explored ambitious vocabulary and wrote descriptive simile poems and descriptions inspired by the fox.

In Maths, we have continued developing our understanding of addition using the column method. The children have been using place value counters and place value grids to help them understand exchanging before applying the formal written method. They have worked hard to explain their reasoning and develop confidence when solving calculations.



In PSHE this week, we have been learning to notice and identify thoughts, feelings and emotions. We discussed how emotions can vary in strength and explored ways of recognising and managing different feelings.

In RE, we have been focusing on pagan worldviews. The children learned about the Wheel of the Year and the importance of seasonal changes within pagan traditions. They then reflected on their own experiences of the year by creating a personal wheel of the year, thinking about significant events, celebrations and changes across the seasons.



In Science, we have been learning about healthy eating and nutrition. The children identified the nutrients humans need to maintain a balanced diet and discussed how different foods help our bodies to grow, stay healthy and function effectively.

Malala also had their first swimming lesson this week. We are so proud of how they approached the experience with enthusiasm and confidence, showing excellent listening skills and a positive attitude throughout.

Year 4 (Tagore Class and Turing Class)

It has been a very busy and productive first week back filled with lots of learning and an eagerness to grow!



Our English learning started off with a journey through a forest, listening to the sounds and noticing the animals that were around. We recognised that there was someone that didn't quite fit in with the other animals and who needed help to get home to their family. We made predictions about the story, developed our understanding of prepositions and analysed the use of descriptive techniques such as ENPs.

During our Maths learning, we continued to develop our understanding of area. We used our knowledge to create shapes of a given area whilst also considering how we could create visually different shapes of an equal area. We also compared and ordered shapes based on their areas. Before we moved onto deepening our understanding of the multiples of 3, their linked facts and how we can apply this across other multiples.



Whilst finishing off our animals including humans unit, we explored what food chains were. We looked at the variety of roles at play and how that can affect the ecosystems and biomes they are present in.

Geography saw us developing our understanding of different rivers within the United Kingdom and using maps to locate them.

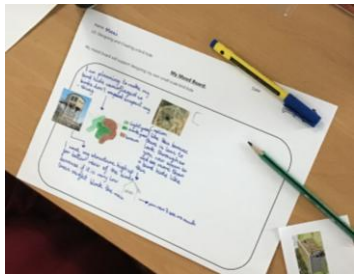




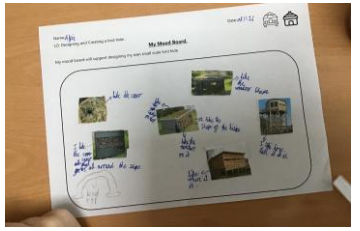
We also began our new music unit about the Pink Panther theme. We looked at the work of Peter Macini and discussed the effects of the different instruments that were present throughout his pieces.

Our Design and Technology learning about bread making began with refamiliarising ourselves with the eat well plate and the importance of a balanced diet.

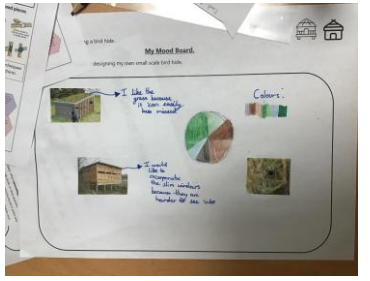
Year 5 (Attenborough Class and Raúf Class)



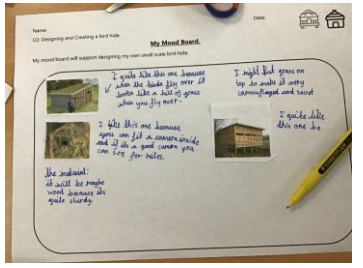
We cannot believe how quickly our first week back has flown by!
In English, we have kick-started our learning around our new text for the term, *FArTHER*, by Grahame Baker-Smith. The children began by using their observation and reasoning skills to make predictions about the story after reading its opening section. We then explored how authors can create a particular mood or atmosphere through carefully chosen vocabulary. The children considered how specific words and phrases can influence the way a reader feels before applying their understanding to write their own personification sentences.



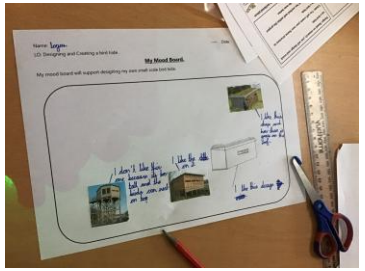
In Maths, we have been finishing our unit by focusing on multiplying and dividing whole numbers by 10, 100 and 1,000. We began by exploring the patterns that occur when numbers move along the place value chart as they are multiplied or divided by different powers of ten. Once the children had identified and understood these patterns, they were able to apply their knowledge with increasing confidence and fluency, tackling a range of more challenging calculations and problems.



In Science, we have begun our exciting new unit on Earth and Space! The children developed their research and enquiry skills by using secondary sources to find out more about our solar system and the planets within it. We then took our learning one step further by creating our very own models of the solar system using different fruits and vegetables! This provided a fantastic opportunity to explore the relative sizes of the planets and consider how effectively our models represented the solar system. The children discovered that, although their models could demonstrate the differences in planetary size, they were much less effective at showing the vast distances between the planets. We are very excited to continue exploring the wonders of space over the coming weeks!



In RE, we have started a new topic exploring prayer and its importance within different religious worldviews. This week, our focus was on Buddhist traditions, where the children learned more about how Buddhists pray and the different practices they might use. In particular, we explored the use of prayer wheels and considered their purpose, as well as the meaning and impact these practices might have on an individual. Next lesson, we look forward to extending our learning by exploring prayer within Jewish traditions and comparing the similarities and differences between different approaches to prayer.



Finally, in DT, we have started our new project, which will involve designing and creating our very own bird hides. The children began by exploring what a bird hide is, its purpose and how it can be used to observe wildlife without disturbing it. We then investigated some of the typical structures and features of bird hides before using these ideas to create our own mood boards. These will provide inspiration and help guide the children as they begin developing their own designs and considering the materials, features and structures they might include in their final creations.

Year 6 (Pogson Class and Walker Class)

It was wonderful to welcome the children back after half term. They have returned with positive attitudes and have settled straight back into their learning routines.

In English, we began exploring our new class text, *A Story Like the Wind* by Gill Lewis. The children used clues from the front cover and opening pages to make predictions about the story and its characters. We also spent time exploring new and ambitious vocabulary from the text, discussing meanings and applying our new knowledge by using the words in our own sentences. We are looking forward to discovering more about the story in the coming weeks.

In Maths, we started our new unit on fractions. The children have been simplifying fractions, finding equivalent fractions and representing fractions on number lines. They have enjoyed spotting patterns and using their understanding of fraction values to explain their reasoning. This has laid a strong foundation for the more challenging fraction work we will be exploring later in the unit.

In History, we started our new topic on Crime and Punishment. This week, we travelled back to Roman Britain to investigate how the Romans enforced law and order. The children explored the Twelve Tables, one of the earliest written law codes, and examined the different punishments used for crimes. We discussed how Roman punishments reflected the values and beliefs of the time and compared them with those used today.

In Art, the children completed an observational drawing inspired by our new artist, Roman Halter. They carefully studied details and proportions, taking their time to sketch accurately and thoughtfully. It was fantastic to see the concentration and creativity on display throughout the lesson.

In Science, we began our new unit on Light. The children explored how light travels and investigated the idea that light moves in straight lines. They asked thoughtful questions and made sensible predictions as we started to build our understanding of this fascinating area of science.

Well done, Year 6, on a fantastic first week back. We are looking forward to another exciting week of learning ahead!

Signals Class

We hope you all have a restful break. The children have returned engaged and full of energy and have settled back in Signals life well! This week, the children have been busy developing their early maths, communication and independence skills through lots of practical, hands-on learning.

In Maths, some children have been learning about one more and one less to 10 using exciting rocket-themed activities. They enjoyed adding and removing rockets from the launch pad to help them understand how numbers change. Other children have been practising counting objects to 5 and 10, using activities linked to their own interests to make learning meaningful and engaging.

During Bucket Time, the children have made fantastic progress and have now moved on to Stage 3. They are becoming increasingly confident joining in activities and maintaining their attention. A particular favourite was the rocket launch from the stool, which created lots of excitement and anticipation!

To develop fine motor skills and early writing, the children have been practising making marks using glitter and have enjoyed copying simple firework patterns. These activities help to strengthen hand control and coordination while encouraging creativity.

In PSHE, we have been learning about staying safe around fireworks and bonfires. The children explored ways to keep themselves safe, including covering their ears or using ear defenders if noises feel too loud, staying at a safe distance and remaining close to a trusted adult.

To support this learning, we created a pretend bonfire using yellow, orange and red scarves, a torch and some logs. During the activity, Timmy the Puppet stood too close to the fire. The children did a fantastic job spotting that something was wrong and used symbols, pointing and gestures to show that Timmy was too close and needed to move back to stay safe. The children engaged really well with these important safety messages and showed excellent understanding of how to stay safe around bonfires.

What you can do at home:
Try counting everyday objects together, such as toys, snacks or steps. You could also talk about loud sounds and practise ways to stay calm, such as covering ears, wearing headphones, or staying close to a familiar adult.

Have a lovely weekend all!













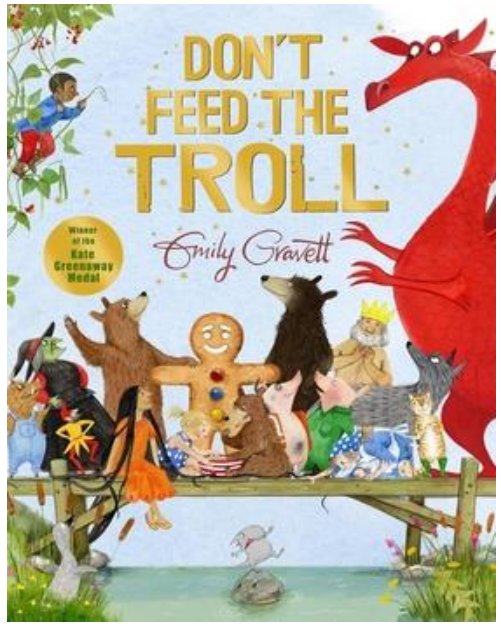




Recommended Read

Don't Feed the Troll by **Emily Gravett** is a hilarious and beautifully illustrated story that brings together a host of well-loved fairytale characters, all on their way to a special picnic. However, to get there they must cross a bridge guarded by a very grumpy troll. As the troll throws unkind insults at everyone he meets, he grows bigger and stronger while the fairytale characters become increasingly upset.

Full of humour, familiar characters and delightful details to spot in the illustrations, this entertaining story also shares a valuable message about dealing with unkind behaviour. Children will enjoy seeing how the characters work together to outsmart the troll and learn that bullies often thrive on the reactions they receive. A wonderful book to read together, it provides plenty of opportunities for meaningful discussions about kindness, resilience and friendship.



Online Safety

Online Gaming Profiles

When your child sets up an online gaming profile, help them keep their personal details private. Encourage them to use a fun nickname instead of their real name and never include information like age, school or home address. If the game asks for a profile picture, choose something like an avatar or a favourite character rather than a photo of your child. Make sure privacy settings are turned on and remind them to come to you before sharing anything online. A quick check together can make gaming safe and fun!

Refer to BBC Bitesize for more top tips and information about online gaming. There are videos to share with your child in order to help them set up their gaming profiles safely.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/articles/zy87ywx



Whole School Attendance	
Attendance since September	97.3%
This week's attendance	96.7%
Latest Local Authority ranking	31 out of 194 schools
Latest National ranking	Top 10-20% of schools
This Friday's Attendance	95.9%

Outstanding	**100%**	190 days of full learning All lessons complete
Very Good	**98%**	186 days of learning 4 days and 20 lessons missed
Good	**96%**	182 days of learning 8 days and 40 lessons missed
More needed	**94%**	178 days of learning 12 days and 60 lessons missed
Concerning	**92%**	174 days of learning 16 days and 80 lessons missed
Very concerning	**90%**	171 days of learning 19 days and 95 lessons missed

Whole school target is 96%

National research shows, on average, children who meet expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics have higher attendance than those who did not.

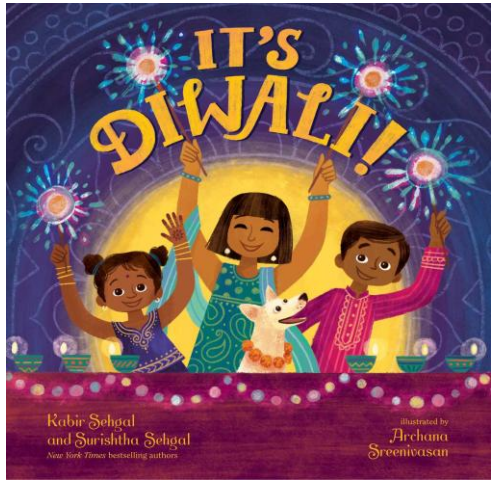
Please contact the school for support and advice if you are concerned about your child's attendance.

NHS England has provided helpful guidance for parents and carers when making the difficult decision regarding not sending a child to school.

NHS guidance- Is my child too ill for school?

Collective Worship

During Worship Through Story, we reflected on Diwali and the importance of understanding and celebrating the different festivals and traditions within our community. We discussed how learning about one another's cultures helps us to build respect, appreciation and stronger relationships. We then read It's Diwali! by Surishtha and Kabir Sehgal, which introduced us to some of the traditions associated with the Festival of Light, including family celebrations, decorations and the symbolic importance of light overcoming darkness.



This week, Pogson Class led Celebration Collective Worship,

focussing on Remembrance Day. Thank you for leading the worship so respectfully.

In our Collective Worship on Tuesday, we spoke about the question: What kind of person do I choose to be? We focussed on ripples of kindness and how if we make a kind choice, this may spread to someone else who may choose to show an act of kindness too. We not only spoke about how this shows our value of love, but also spoke about integrity, including how we should show acts of kindness all the time – even if no one is watching.

Collective worship at St Gabriel's always aims to be **inspirational** for all, **invitational** to all and **inclusive** of all.

Key Dates

Monday 9th November – Reception Phonics Parent Information Session (3.30pm-4.30pm)

Friday 13th November – Walker Class Celebration Worship (10.15am-10.45am)

Friday 13th November – Non-Uniform Day in support of Zoe's Place children's hospice (Children in Need)

Friday 13th November – RSHE Parent Information Session (2.45pm-3.15pm). Come and find out more about our RSHE curriculum and ask any questions you may have.

Friday 20th November – Turing Class Celebration Worship (10.15am-10.45am)

Thursday 26th November – Wreath Making Workshop (6.00pm)

Friday 27th November – Attenborough Class Celebration Worship (10.15am-10.45am)

Friday 27th November – Christmas Fair (3.30pm-5.00pm)

Monday 30th November- Beauty and the Beast Christmas Panto

Thursday 3rd December to Tuesday 8th December – Book Fair (3.30pm-4.00pm daily)

Thursday 10th December – Christmas Jumper Day

Tuesday 15th December – EYFS Nativity (10.00am and 2.00pm)

Wednesday 16th December – Christmas Dinner Day

Thursday 17th December – KS1 Nativity (2.00pm and 5.30pm)

Friday 18th December – Children finish at 2pm. No Angels afterschool club.



Christmas Wreath Making

26TH | NOV | 6 PM

St Gabriel's C of E Academy,
Houlton

£45 per ticket, including all supplies, a welcome drink and festive treat!

To secure your place, please contact
office@stgabrielscofeacademy.org



Christmas Fair Raffle Prizes Needed!

As we prepare for our upcoming Christmas Fair, we are looking for donations of raffle prizes to help make our raffle a fantastic success.

If you own a business, work for a company that may be willing to donate or know of a local business that could support us, we would be incredibly grateful for any contributions. Prizes could include gift vouchers, experiences, hampers, products, services or any other items suitable for a family raffle.

If you are able to donate a prize, please contact the school office.

Thank you for your continued support and generosity.

Family Support

Family Lives offer free online parenting courses which you can work through by yourself at a time to suit you.

All the courses are filled with helpful techniques and ideas developed by experienced parenting professionals to help you become a confident and happy parent. The range of courses support from pregnancy through to the teenage years, covering topics including play, behaviour, supporting siblings and co-parenting.

Worried About a Child?

If you have concerns that a child is suffering any form of abuse, neglect or cruelty, contact the Warwickshire Children and Families Family Connect immediately by calling 01926 414144. Lines are open Monday to Thursday 8.30am - 5.30pm, Friday 8.30am-5.00pm.

If you need to get in touch out of usual office hours, please contact the Emergency Duty Team immediately by calling 01926 886922.

If you think that a child is at immediate risk, contact the police immediately by calling 999.

St Gabriel's CofE Academy, Houlton Way, Houlton, Rugby, CV23 1AN

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