



## November & December 2023

Dear all,

I write to you with little over a week of the autumn term left. I cannot believe we are almost at the end of our first term already! It already seems so long ago that we were all gathering together for the November Fireworks event.

The last few weeks have been action packed with so many different activities taking place across the school and we are now in well into our program of Christmas activities. It was an absolute pleasure welcoming the parents of our EYFS children into school last week to watch their performance of 'A Wiggly Nativity!'

On Monday the children were treated to a performance of the Gingerbread Man and the magic box by the visiting Widdershins Theatre. A huge thank you to our PTA for funding this experience for our children. They all seemed to really enjoy themselves.

Our attention then turned to our Key Stage 1 children as they put on three performances of their Christmas show 'Prickly Hay!' Again it was so lovely to see so many parents attend these performances.

This edition of our newsletter covers both November and December events so there is lots to read about that has happened this half term.

It was so lovely to see so many parents join us in church this afternoon for our newly introduced Christingle Service. I hope those who could make it enjoyed it as much as we all did.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to wish you all a fantastic festive season with your families. I hope that you all have a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024 for the beginning of our spring term.

Mr S England  
Headteacher



**A reminder that our school events are now shared on the new website calendar. There is a function for you to subscribe to this to have dates sync to your device.**

**<https://www.ashwell.herts.sch.uk/calendar/?calendar=1&pid=8&viewid=1>**

- 18<sup>th</sup> Dec – Choir Concert (PM)
- 19<sup>th</sup> Dec – Christmas Lunch & Santa visit
- 20<sup>th</sup> Dec – End of term (1pm)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Jan – Spring Term Starts
- 12<sup>th</sup> Jan – Year 5 Class Assembly
- 15<sup>th</sup> Jan – Cheerleading Workshops
- 23<sup>rd</sup> Jan – Maths Day
- 1<sup>st</sup> Feb – Year 6 Houses of Parliament visit
- 5<sup>th</sup> Feb – Online Safety Week
- 16<sup>th</sup> Feb – Year 6 Class Assembly
- 16<sup>th</sup> Feb – Art Day
- 16<sup>th</sup> Feb – PTA Disco
- 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb – HALF TERM

### Thank you to our parent volunteers

I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has volunteered their time to help in school this term. Your time is greatly appreciated by our staff and children. We want to wish you a Merry Christmas.



### Charity Fundraising Totals

Poppy Appeal £125.95  
Children in Need £657 + £149.25 Gift Aid  
Christmas Jumper day £324.50 + £77.88 Gift Aid  
School Raffle £513  
Christmas Bazaar £443.89  
Garden House Hospice (EYFS & KS1 show tickets) £560

**Thank you for supporting these events.**

### Remembrance Reflections

During week beginning 6<sup>th</sup> November, children spent time in lessons and assemblies reflecting on what Remembrance means to us.

We came together as a whole school to hold a 2 minute silence at 11am on the 10<sup>th</sup> with the last post being played. It is always really powerful coming together to observe it with such respect shown by all. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the poppy appeal.



### Rural Schools Netball Tournament

On Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November, our school netball team took part in the Rural School Netball Tournament.

The children competed in 4 fixtures before being placed in the semi-finals where there were narrowly beaten by the opposing team who scored in the final minute of the game.

Well done to all children who took part, once again they showed incredible sportsmanship throughout and did the school proud.



### Christmas Holiday Club - Premier

There will be a Premier Camps Multi-activity Holiday Club at Ashwell School on the following dates:

➤ Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December & Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December

This will be open to children aged 4-11 and more information is available at:

<https://www.premier-education.com/holidaycamps>



### Nursery Admissions

The admissions information for our Nursery and Reception – September 2024 Intake is now all on our website [here](#).

#### Reception – September 2024 Intake

If you would like to book onto a Reception tour please use the link below:

[Reception Tours](#)

Deadline for applications – 15/1/24

Allocation Day – 16/4/24

All admissions are via:

[www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions)

#### Nursery - September 2024 Intake

If you would like to book onto a Nursery tour please use the link below:

[Nursery Tours](#)

Deadline for applications – 9/2/24

Allocation Day – 8/3/24

\*PLACES STILL AVAILABLE in current Nursery cohort

[On-Line Application Form](#)



### Advent @ Ashwell

*Our School Advent window – with thanks to Miss Harber & Year 1*



### Ashwell Show Committee Funding

At the beginning of the term, the school were invited by the Ashwell Show committee to bid for funding and a share of the profits that were made from the show in the summer.

I am delighted to be able to share with you that we have received the following funding from the Ashwell Show committee. We are incredibly grateful for their generosity.

- New classroom Visualisers £612.00
- Special Educational Resources £89.20
- Donation towards our Sensory Room £1002.19
- Design & Technology Resources £437.42
- EYFS Resources £1057.72

Total £3198.53



### Year 3 – Fitzwilliam Museum Visit

As part of their topic on the Ancient Egyptians, Year 3 visited the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.

They started the morning looking around the Egyptian galleries with the help of one of the museum curators. The children then spent some time looking at the artefacts in the galleries to help them find out a bit more about life in ancient Egyptian times.

In the afternoon, they took part in a papyrus painting workshop, where they found out how papyrus paper is made. They then painted their own Egyptian inspired paintings on papyrus paper using a special type of paint called gouache.



### PTA Updates

A huge thank you to everyone who has supported our PTA so far this year. They have already had a hugely successful Fireworks event that was attended by close to 1000 people. This was then followed up with an extension to our Year 6 Christmas Bazaar. It was lovely to see so many people both helping and supporting them raise valuable funds for our school.



You can view the new PTA website to access information and their shop - <https://ashwellpta.co.uk/>

Dates for your diary:

**PTA Disco – Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February**

**Mother's Day Show – Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March**

If you would like to contact the PTA:

[info@ashwellpta.co.uk](mailto:info@ashwellpta.co.uk)



Remember you can still support the school by using the link below when shopping online:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/ashwell-school/>

Or by donating @

[https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted\\_button\\_id=FMN6V7N9XZDVY](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=FMN6V7N9XZDVY)

### Safeguarding

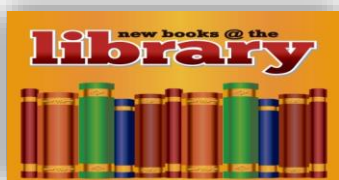
In school, we constantly remind our children that they can report any concerns they have about themselves or someone else to any adult in school. We encourage parents to report their concerns too. A reminder that our Designated Safeguarding Leads are Mr England & Mrs Andrews.



## Donate a Book to our Library

Book donations continue to come into the school from our wish list.

A huge thank you to everyone who has already purchased a new book for the school library. To see our children's wish list and to donate a new book please see: <http://amzn.eu/OR6HXL4>



## Attendance

Attendance at Ashwell has seen a decline this half term, it has dropped by over 2% recently. Our whole school figure at 96.3% for 2023-24.

**May I remind parents to avoid booking holidays or medical appointments during school times wherever possible.**

Class	%
Year 3	97.9%
Year 5	97.8%
Acorn (Nursery)	96.9%
Year 1	96.8%
Year 4	96.7%
Year 2	96.2%
Oak (Reception)	95.9%
Year 6	93.4%

## Reception – Audley End Visit

On Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November, Oak class had the most magical trip to Audley End to see Santa!

Prior to the visit, Oak class had explored the features of a letter and the journey a letter goes on from being posted to reaching its final destination. They used this learning to write their own Christmas letters to Santa which they took, shared with Santa and then proudly posted.

Whilst at Audley End, they used their maths skills to follow instructions to successfully make reindeer food, visited the man himself, watched a show and went on a train ride through the forest.



Congratulations to Year 3 who won the class attendance award for Autumn 2 and will have a non-uniform day as a reward.

## Chill & Chat Fridays

As part of our whole school approach to supporting pupil wellbeing and mental health we have set up a weekly 'Chill and Chat' lunch club.

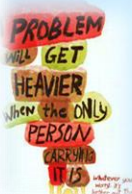
This takes place in Ash and is open to all children, should they wish to attend, during Friday lunchtimes.

It is run by Mrs Andrews and Miss Sohal (Early Years TA), it is a safe space for children to talk to a school adult about anything that might be worrying them.

Do you have a worry? Is something making you unhappy? Come along to...

# Chill and Chat!

Friday lunch times in Ash  
A safe space to talk



Oak class making their reindeer food!

### Year 5 – Sartorius Site Visit

On Wednesday 29th, Year 5 visited the Royston site of Sartorius. They specialise in the design and manufacture of automated cell culture and fermentation systems for the bio-pharma, regenerative medicine and industrial biotechnology sectors, including: Bioprocess Development, GMP Manufacture of Biologics, Cell Therapy and Stem Cell Research and Discovery Research.

The children were split into three groups and they had four different activities to complete. A food/ yeast experiment, looking at how to use a 3D computing program and how a 3D printer works. Then they went to the 'parts' department to receive their parts for Ambr15. Their last activity was putting their parts together for their robot, to test three speeds, ultimately measuring the amount of 'foam' at the top of the solution. Concluding which was the best speed to test at.

I hope that they will take something away with them from our visit there, and maybe even possibly considering a career in the Science industry!

### Children in Need

On Friday 17<sup>th</sup> November, we joined together to celebrate and raise money for Children in Need. Events during the day were organised by our School Council.

During the morning, our school council led us in an assembly, they shared information about the history of Children in Need and also about the important work that they do to support children across the country.

During morning break, in what is now tradition, Year 6 took on a staff team in a netball match. As ever, the staff were relentless and showed their competitive side, refusing to go easy on the children! I have forgotten the score now but the staff won comfortably.

A fantastic £657 + £149.25 Gift Aid was raised so thank you for your support with this.



### Mode Shift Travel Award

We are delighted to have been awarded our Bronze Green Travel Accreditation again for 2023. Our children have benefited from a wide range of active and safer travel initiatives over the past year, including scooter training, Bikeability, pedestrian skills and distraction training. We also ran a hugely successful Walk to School Week and, of course, our recent Bling your Scooter Day. We are already planning lots of green travel activities for the year ahead and are aiming for the Silver Award for 2024!



## Year 6 Art work

In an Art lesson, during the week of Remembrance, Year 6 looked at a painting called 'Gassed' by John Singer Sargent. After analysing the painting, and learning the story behind it, they then worked on how to apply drama techniques to explore the meaning of the painting. They recreated the scene, taking on the role of the soldiers!

Gassed, an oil study, 1918-19 (oil on canvas), by John Singer Sargent



## School Christmas Tree

A huge thank you to Tapps Garden Centre in Baldock for donating our school Christmas tree. Year 1 children helped Mrs Bowen and Miss Carroll to decorate it.



## Year 6 Bazaar

On Friday 1<sup>st</sup> December, our Year 6 children, along with some support from staff and parent volunteers hosted the Christmas Bazaar in the school hall. At the same time as this, children visited some special guests, two reindeer, in the EYFS playground. A huge thank you to Bridgeman Construction who funded this surprise treat for the children. Following the afternoon's event. Our lovely PTA put on an extra special Christmas event for parents to join in with. A fantastic way to start the festivities.



## EYFS Production

During the week beginning 4<sup>th</sup> December, our EYFS children put on three performances of 'A Wriggly Nativity'. They performed to the whole school and then two shows to parents.

A Wriggly Nativity' told the Christmas story almost entirely through songs, actions, movement and dance. The children learnt all of the songs and the associated actions.



## Key Stage 1 Production

During the week beginning 11<sup>th</sup> December, our Key Stage 1 children put on three performances of 'Prickly Hay'. They performed to the whole school and then two shows to parents.

'Prickly Hay' was an exciting nativity musical with a fun hoedown flavour. It was narrated by Sam, a hardworking stable boy, and features himself, his faithful friend Shrew and some very special visitors.



## Bling your scooter to school day

On Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December, children were invited to come to school in their Christmas jumpers as part of Save the Children Christmas Jumper day. In addition to this, Mrs Andrews organised a Bling your scooter to school competition to promote travelling to school by scooter.

We had 53 entries which was absolutely amazing. It was so difficult to pick a winner but here they are:



A huge thank you to everyone who attended either performance. The money from our ticket sales is being donated to our chosen charity – Garden House Hospice.



*The 53 entries for 'Bling your scooter to school day!'*

## SEND

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> November we had our first SEND Coffee Morning for parents and it was lovely to meet with some of our parents to discuss how we support with SEND at Ashwell, and for parents to meet to chat and talk about their own children.

As Ashwell we firmly believe that by promoting a culture of empathy, awareness, and support for individuals with SEND, we not only enhance the learning experience for all students but also cultivate a community that celebrates diversity.

Our next Coffee Morning is timetabled for Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> February at 9am and you are invited to attend whether your child has SEND or not.

Likewise, please do look at the Herts Local Offer to find out what special educational needs and disabilities services are available in Hertfordshire, and who can access them:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/the-hertfordshire-local-offer.aspx>



## Anti-Bully Week

On the 13th November, we launched our annual Anti-Bullying Week with 'Odd Socks Day' to celebrate our individuality and uniqueness. In class, children took part in a variety of activities to understand the impact that bullying can have what to do if we spot it. This year's theme was 'Make a Noise about Bullying' and we had some fantastic poems written by our Key Stage Two children. [Click here](#)

## Christmas Extras!

It was so lovely to see our Choir singing at the Village Christmas Carol concert on Wednesday. Well done to the children and Miss Back for their performance.



It was also an absolute treat to gather together for a Christingle service in church this afternoon. What a lovely way to end the week. A huge thank you to all of the parents who came and especially to Rev Chris for hosting us and providing all of the Christingle sets for the children to make in school.



## Spring Term Club Timetable 2024

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Before School</b> 8:00 - 8:45			Dodge Ball (20) (Year 1-3) Premier Sport Hall	Dodge Ball (20) (Year 4-6) Premier Sport Hall	Chess (20) Yrs 2 - 6 Dr Hunt Ash/Library
<b>Lunchtime</b> 11:45 - 12:15			Team Games (20) (Year 3&4) Premier Sport MUGA	Team Games (20) (Year 3&4) Premier Sport MUGA	
<b>Lunchtime</b> 12:15 - 12:45	Music (20) (Year 1-6) Miss Back Hall		Team Games (20) (Year R, 1&2) Premier Sport MUGA	Team Games (20) (Year R, 1&2) Premier Sport MUGA	
	Speed Stacking (15) (Yrs 3-4) Miss Meehan Room tbc	Dance (30) Yrs R-2 Miss Meehan Hall			
<b>After school</b> 3:15 - 4:15		Gymnastics (20) (Year 1-6) Premier Sport Hall	Football (20) (Year 4-6) Premier Sport Meadow	Netball (20) (Year 4-6) Premier Sport Playground	

Dates: 8<sup>th</sup> January 2024 – 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2024 (Half term 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb)

# How Does School Attendance Affect a Child's Learning?

365 Days in a Year  
190 School Days  
175 Non School Days

0 Days  
Absence

190  
Days  
in  
School

Perfect!

100%  
Attendance

Best chance of success

10 Days  
Absence

180  
Days  
in  
School

95%  
Attendance

19 Days  
Absence

171  
Days  
in  
School

90%  
Attendance

Less chance of success

29 Days  
Absence

161  
Days  
in  
School

85%  
Attendance

38 Days  
Absence

152  
Days  
in  
School

80%  
Attendance

Serious impact on  
education and  
reduced life chances

47 Days  
Absence

143  
Days  
in  
School

75%  
Attendance

Over half  
a term  
missed!

Having 90% Over 5 school  
years, is half a school  
year's work missed.

A 2 week holiday in term  
time, means that the  
highest attendance a child  
can achieve is 94.7%

4  
weeks  
missed!

# Please park **SAFELY**

**We need everyone to play their part in keeping the roads near schools safe.**

## **DRIVERS SHOULD NOT:**

- park on yellow zig zag markings.
- park on double yellow lines at any time, or on single yellows during restricted hours.
- park or drive on footpaths.
- park within 10 metres of a junction, as this decreases visibility.
- block driveways or dropped kerbs.

You may be issued with a fixed penalty notice.

Thank you for your cooperation.

