



January 2024

Dear all,

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2024. Although we have only been back at school for a short while, there is already lots to share with you in this month's newsletter.

Just before Christmas, and since returning in January, I have been busy showing lots of prospective parents around our school. It is the time of year when our Nursery and Reception 2024 cohorts apply to join our school. It still remains one of my favourite parts of my job. Showing off our school in action gives me a great sense of joy and pride in our children and staff.

The spring term is easily the shortest term in our academic year. Spring 1 is six weeks and two days with spring 2 being only four and half weeks long! In addition to it being the shortest term, there are so many national and local events and special days that fall within this time frame. This is why the term always feels so busy! Some of the exciting things ahead include: Safer Internet Day, Art Day & Exhibition, an English Parent workshop, World Book Day, Science Week, our Year 3/4 Production and our spring term parent consultation event. These are just a few of the highlights, for the full calendar of events, please refer to our school website or the list of events as seen adjacent to this message.

Finally, I wanted to share some of the key themes that I have been discussing with children in our whole school Monday assemblies since returning after Christmas. We started by talking about 'Positive Play', this then lead onto the theme of 'Kindness' and then 'Honesty'. All classes have been focussing on having more positive interactions and play during break times this half term.

I very much hope that you enjoyed reading about everything that has been going on so far this term.

Mr S England
Headteacher

JANUARY



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/?calid=1&pid=8&viewid=1>

- 1st Feb – Year 6 Houses of Parliament visit
- 5th Feb – Online Safety Week
- 16th Feb – Year 6 Class Assembly
- 16th Feb – Art Day
- 16th Feb – PTA Disco
- 19th – 23rd Feb – HALF TERM
- 29th Feb – Parent English Workshop
- 1st March – Art Exhibition
- 5th March – Year 1 Toys Workshop Trip
- 7th March – World Book Day
- 8th March – Year 5/6 Shakespeare visit
- 8th March – PTA Mothers' Day Shop
- 11th March – Science Week
- 14th March – Year 5/6 KNex Day
- 20th & 21st March – Year 3/4 Production
- 22nd March – Neuro Diversity Day
- 22nd March – PTA Easter Bingo
- 25th & 27th March – Parents evening
- 27th March – Drumba Workshops
- 28th March – End of Term (1pm)
- 15th April – INSET DAY School Closed
- 16th April – Summer Term Begins



Year 5 visited Year 1 to share their pop-up books made in their DT lessons.

Road Safety & Travel Skills

This term, we have continued with our enriched curriculum by including an element of road and travel safety. This work contributes towards our Mode Shift Travel Star award, for which we currently hold a Bronze accreditation. So far this term, Year 5 have completed 'Distraction Training'. The children took part in road safety sessions that were delivered by a member of the HCC school travel team.



Year 6 Houses of Parliament Visit



On Thursday 1st February, our Year 6 children visited the Houses of Parliament. They began the visit with a guided tour, seeing both the House of Commons and House of Lords, live in action from the viewing gallery! It was fantastic to be able to experience this with them and I was so impressed with their knowledge. Following this, the children took part in a debating session in the education centre before meeting our local MP, Sir Oliver Heald where the children asked lots of questions and made some fantastic points about improvements needed in their village of Ashwell!



Half Term Holiday Club - Premier

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

➤ Monday 19th February – Friday 23rd February

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

Deadline for applications – NOW CLOSED

Allocation Day – 16/4/24

All admissions are via:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

Nursery - September 2024 Intake

Deadline for applications – 9/2/24

Allocation Day – 8/3/24

*PLACES STILL AVAILABLE in current Nursery cohort

[On-Line Application Form](#)



Safer Internet Day

Next week, children will be taking part in a daily online safety session as part of our activities to promote keeping safe online. A letter with full details and support materials will be coming next week to support parents reinforce this message at home. Children will be taking part in lessons with the following themes: Self-image & Identity, Health, Well-being & lifestyle, Online Relationships and Online Bullying.



SAVE the DATE

Safer Internet Day

2024 | Tuesday
6 February

www.saferinternetday.org



SEND News

Delivering Specialist Provision Locally (DSPL) is a Hertfordshire-wide partnership approach where parents, carers, staff in education settings, local authority officers and representatives from other agencies, work together as part of an Area Group, to ensure that there is a range of provision and support services available in their local community.

At Ashwell School we are part of DSPL1 (North Hertfordshire). Each week DSPL1 produce a weekly newsletter - an update of courses, workshops and signposting for parents and carers.

You can access it via: <https://tinyurl.com/DSPLnews>



Delivering Special
Provision Locally

Active and Safer Travel Team

This term, following successful applications, a group of Year 5 and Year 6 children have been selected as 'Active Travel Ambassadors'.

Their role will be to help promote active travel across the school. They will explore local travel issues, run campaigns, keep a journal, look after a noticeboard and work with both Mrs Andrews and the Herts Active and Safer travel team.

Congratulations to our ambassadors who are:

- ✓ Ted
- ✓ Leo
- ✓ Harvey
- ✓ Kitty
- ✓ Fletcher
- ✓ Bethan

Well done! We're looking forward to working with you!



PTA Updates

The following have recently been funded by the PTA:

- ✚ Father Christmas Santa Visit
- ✚ Christmas Lunch Extras (Crackers etc)
- ✚ Widdershins Theatre Production
- ✚ 4 x New Basketball posts for the playground
- ✚ Class Basketballs as requested by school council

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

Dates for your diary:

- ✓ PTA Disco – Friday 16th February
- ✓ Mother's Day Shop – Friday 8th March
- ✓ Easter Bingo – Friday 22nd March

If you would like to contact the PTA:
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

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.

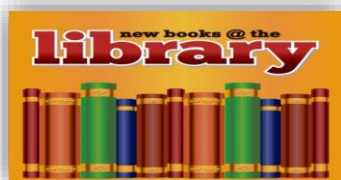
**Keeping
children safe
is everyone's
responsibility**



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/OR6HXL>



Attendance

Attendance at Ashwell has seen a decline this academic year, it has dropped by over 2% vs this time last year. Our whole school figure at 95.8% for 2023-24.

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

Class	%
Year 5	97.5%
Year 3	97.4%
Year 4	96.8%
Acorn (Nursery)	96.8%
Year 1	96.3%
Oak (Reception)	95.7%
Year 2	94.7%
Year 6	92.9%

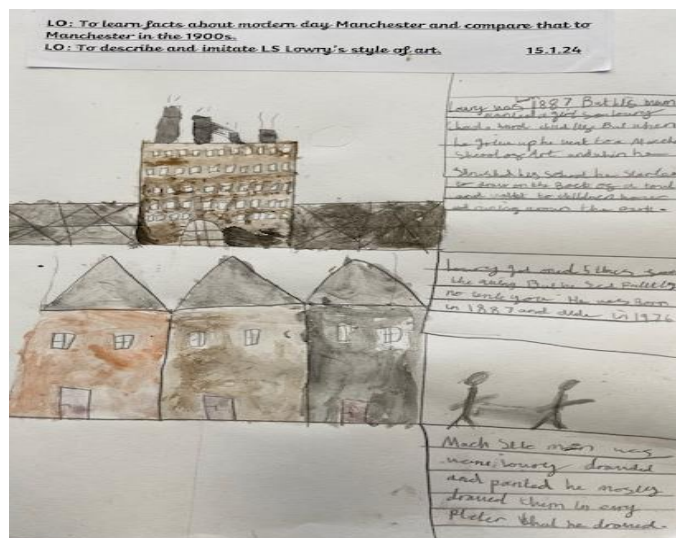
Year 3 Castles Topic

In their Design and technology lessons last term, year 3 designed and made castles. They found out about the different features of a castle and how these help to defend against an enemy. Before they drew their designs, they had to decide who would live in their castle and how they could make it strong and stable using different materials and techniques. Once their designs were complete, they used them to create their own castles. Finally, they evaluated their design, thinking about what went well and how they could improve their castle if they made them again.



Year 4 – Art Work

In year 4, children have been learning about the artist LS Lowry as part of our spring term topic, which is about comparing urban and rural areas of the UK. They learned how Lowry painted mostly urban landscapes, showing the working man in the streets of Salford and other parts of northern England. We also looked at the colours Lowry used and the children tried to imitate parts of Lowry's painting using watercolours.



Year 5 – Design & Technology

On the first two days of the spring term 2024, Year 5 took part in their next DT 'Kapow unit'; making stuffed toys.

After watching a video on stuffed toy animals, we planned out our template of our chosen animal, and detailed it with buttons, running stitches, and add ons such as patches and ears.

The template was then used to cut out our felt templates ready to be sewn. We already knew how to do a running stitch from year 4, so this new learning was to sew a blanket stitch.

We sewed on our buttons and ears/fins, and then finally the two felt templates together using the blanket stitch. We left a small gap for the stuffing to go in.

A lot of fun was had the first two days back! The class thoroughly enjoyed showing them to you all during our Year 5 class assembly!

Whole School Maths Day

On Tuesday 23rd January, the entire school enjoyed our Maths Day. This year it was themed around fractions and telling the time.



Activities ranged from looking at halves in Reception with food, finding fractions of quantities with practical resources, active maths in the hall, making clocks and many opportunities for problem solving.



Several classes also learned about famous mathematicians and their contributions to the world today. The children were invited to explore puzzles and find creative solutions to problems, inspired by these amazing historical men and women.



The Masked Reader 2024

We are all very excited about the Masked Reader competition that Mrs. Furr has organised for us this year. We are using the competition to promote a love of reading, and in conjunction with World Book Day, raise money to fund replenishment of some of our school book stock.

Full details of how to enter can be found in the letter sent on Monday 29th January.

ENTER NOW

[WATCH PROMOTIONAL VIDEO HERE](#)

ENTER HERE – [Masked Reader 2024](#)

1. Video entry (30 seconds max)
2. Two cryptic clues

Please make sure both files have Child's name & class
£5 ENTRY FEE PLEASE VIA ARBOR SCHOOL SHOP

Break Time Snacks & Packed Lunches

While on playground duty last week, I had several children come up to me asking if they could do a litter pick to help the school environment. It was lovely to see some of our children being so caring and proactive. Before long, there was an army of children joining in. They worked together to create a pile of the litter they had collected as they wanted to photograph it and share it with the rest of the school in an assembly.

Once they had collected the pile, they also sorted the litter into piles of what they thought was ok to have as a break time snack and items that were against our school's Healthy Eating Policy.

Please can we take this opportunity to remind parents of our Healthy Eating & Drinking Policy.

Break time Snacks

As part of our healthy eating ethos, ALL break time snacks must be a piece of fruit or vegetables (fresh/dried) or a healthy, appropriate alternative e.g. cereal bar (not containing chocolate) or bread stick type items. We do not permit any other snacks to be eaten at break time. If children have snacks that are not in line with our Healthy Eating and Drinking Policy, staff will speak with parents at the end of the school day.

Packed lunches should not include:

- Too many highly processed items
- Confectionary such as sweets or chocolate bars
- Fizzy or sugary drinks
- Nuts

Year 6 Lunch Leaders

As part of our continued quest to improve the quality of lunchtimes and develop our older children as young leaders. We have recently introduced a new role for our Year 6 children. They now support our youngest children in the dining room. This can involve cutting up food, opening packets, pouring water and encouraging children to eat to reduce food waste.



We would recommend that packed lunches do include:

- Water or a small carton of fresh juice
- At least one portion of fruit, vegetable or salad
- Meat, fish or another source of non-dairy protein
- Carbohydrates, such as bread, pasta, rice or potatoes
- Dairy, such as cheese, yoghurt or custard
- A small treat or pudding item such as a cake or biscuit



Reception – Little Chefs

Oak class were treated to a creative chef session today with our special visitor Angie. The children took on the role of a chef and made a healthy and colourful pasta salad. They discussed the importance of eating a rainbow of vegetables and how they keep us healthy. The children were encouraged to try the vegetables before adding them to their pot. When they added the ingredients, they had to follow measuring instruction and count the correct spoonful or pieces into their cup. They were challenged to think of vocabulary to describe each vegetable that they tried. The pasta pots included: pasta, carrots, sweetcorn, peppers, cucumber and cheese. They were very colourful and the children were excellent chefs. They were given a recipe book to take home with their pasta pots which they are excited to share with their grown-ups.



Year 2 – Florence Nightingale Workshop

Year 2 enjoyed a visit from the North Hertfordshire Museum on Tuesday. They have been learning about Florence Nightingale and our visitor came dressed in a striking nurse's outfit which they loved comparing to modern day nurse's scrubs. They were lucky enough to look closely at objects of historical significance to Florence's life as well as reenact some key moments throughout her life.



Year 5 – Anglo Saxon Workshop

Year 5 had a really fun morning on Thursday 1st February. Our visitor showed us some historic artifacts from the Anglo-Saxon times. These included a helmet, a comb, a sword and a sword case. We found out what they ate, what they wore in battle and how they made clothes. We got to get dressed up in their clothes. Overall, it was really interesting and we learnt a lot!
(By Emily R & Rosie N)



Year 4 – Speed Awareness

PCSO Brabrook visited Year 4 this week to raise awareness of speed limits in the local area and to give advice for general road safety. The children had lots of questions about where is safe to play in the village and what to do during games, such as what to do if their football runs into the road. Year 4 are going to design a poster next week and PCSO Brabrook will pick a winner, which will be turned into a poster to be displayed all around the village.



Year 5/6 – Sportshall Athletics

On Wednesday 31st January, some of our Year 5 and 6 children took part in the North Herts Indoor Athletics competition in Hitchin. This consisted of a number of events. Miss Meehan was incredibly proud of the children's effort and sportsmanship shown throughout. Well done to all involved.

Mental Health Support for Hertfordshire's Children and Young People



JUST TALK

If you're young and feeling a bit low, or worried, find the help you need in Herts.



www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/mentalhealthsupportforhertsyoungpeople



JUST TALK

Find advice and help If your child is feeling low, anxious or generally struggling



www.justtalkherts.org

If your child or teenager is feeling low, anxious, or generally struggling, there are lots of services available to help them all year round. Please always encourage them to talk and ask for help if they need it.

The services listed on Just Talk's webpage are all free and don't need a professional referral, so they can be contacted directly by young people and/or their parents/carers. Services listed include Hertfordshire's new With Youth Digital Wellbeing Service for ages 5-18, parents and carers and many more, so please take a look:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/mentalhealthsupportforhertsyoungpeople



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(School Years 3-7)



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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

4
weeks
missed!

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%

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.

