



September / October – Autumn 1

Dear all,

It is hard to believe that our first half term has already passed us by. This is my first newsletter of the academic year, and it contains lots of information and news about the exciting things that have taken place over the last 8 weeks!

We welcomed lots of new children into our Nursery class, Reception class and across the school in other year groups at the beginning of this term. I am delighted to report that they have all settled in incredibly well and it has been a pleasure getting to know them all. In addition to this, we have welcomed new members of staff and Governors!

Clubs, trips and curriculum enrichment activities are now in full flow, it is difficult to keep up with all of the amazing things happening across the school!

As ever, we have had an exceptional busy half term! From 'Meet the teacher' parent sessions through to curriculum enrichment workshops, sports fixtures, class trips and assemblies. Many of these have a short report within this newsletter below.

It is that time of year once again, when the mornings and evenings are now darker and the weather is beginning to take a turn for the worse, Mrs Bowen has even caved in to turning the heating on before we have reached half term this year!

Straight after half term, we start the 'school touring season' when our September 2026 admission cycle begins. Our attention turns to showcasing our wonderful school to prospective parents for Nursery and Reception. Further details regarding this can be found in this newsletter and on the admissions page on our website. If you know anyone with children of that age, please do pass on the message and give them a nudge in our direction!

I wish you all a lovely half term, make the most of it because it won't be long before we enter that Christmas period!

Kind regards,

Mr S England
Headteacher



Our school events are now shared on the website calendar.

<https://www.ashwell.herts.sch.uk/cal>

- 27th – 31st October – Half Term
- 4th November – Y3/4 Football Tournament
- 7th November – Year 3 Fitzwilliam Trip
- 8th November – PTA Fireworks
- 10th – 14th November – Anti-Bullying Week
- 12th November – Year 6 Crucial Crew
- 14th November – Children in Need
- 21st November – Year 4 Class Assembly
- 27th November – Christmas Bazaar
- 28th November – Occasional Day
- 2nd December – Y5/6 Football Tournament
- 4th December – EYFS Performance 1
- 5th December – EYFS Performance 2
- 9th December – Visiting Panto Show
- 10th December – Choir at Village Carols
- 11th December – Key Stage 1 Performance 1
- 12th December – Key Stage 1 Performance 2
- 16th December – Christingle in Church
- 17th December – Music Concert
- 18th December – Christmas Jumper Day
- 18th December – Christmas Lunch & Santa
- 19th December – End of Term (1pm)

Christmas Break 22nd December – 2nd January

- 5th January – INSET DAY
- 6th January – Spring Term Begins

Parent Volunteers

We  Volunteers

Thank you to those who have contacted the office to offer some time and your support. If you have not yet had a chance to, please let us know ASAP as we are co-ordinating parent helpers with the class teachers so that we are able to target needs across the school.

Meet the Teacher

Thank you to everyone who attended our Meet the Teacher sessions. It was fantastic to see so many people.

We hope that you found the session informative and that it gave you a chance to hear about the year ahead, as well as meet your child's class teachers.

You should have received the presentation alongside some other useful documents. Please keep these to refer to as the year goes on.

Parents Evening

Thank you to everyone who attended our parents' evening last week, it was wonderful to have such a fantastic attendance, and the teachers really valued being able to share how children have settled in and provide advice and support on their strengths and how you can continue to support them at home.

Children in Need 2025

This year we will again be supporting Children in Need. A letter with further details of this event will be coming out shortly, our school council are in the process of organising it!



Wellbeing Focus

This year, as part of our whole-school wellbeing approach we will be utilising the NHS's '5 Ways to Wellbeing'.

Each half term, we will be focussing on a different 'way' starting with 'Connect'.

Information on how you can continue this approach at home will be shared on each class's Google Classroom.

If you would like to find out more, you can also visit: 5 steps to mental wellbeing - NHS (www.nhs.uk)



October Half Term - Holiday Camps

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

➤ Monday 27th October – Friday 31st November

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

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



Nursery Admissions

Join our School

The admissions information for our Nursery and Reception – September 2026 Intake is on our [website here](#).

Please note that we are now full in all year groups across the school other than Year 6 where there are 3 spaces.

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

[Reception Tours](#)

Deadline for applications – 15/1/26

Allocation Day – 16/4/26

All admissions are via:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

Nursery – Current

*PLACES STILL AVAILABLE for our September 2025 Nursery Cohort.

[On-Line Application Form](#)

Nursery - September 2026 Intake

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

[Nursery Tours](#)

Deadline for applications – 9/2/26

Allocation Day – 9/3/26

[On-Line Application Form](#)



Black History Month

October is Black History month. Children across the school spent some time reflecting on what this means to us and looking into historical figures and events that they could learn from.

During a whole school assembly to launch the month, we looked at children's current knowledge and what they could build on during the month of October.

During October, teachers planned activities around this theme across their curriculum. For further information please see: <https://www.blackhistorymonth.org.uk/>



Healthy Eating/Drinking Policy

At Ashwell we do our best to promote a healthy lifestyle. We have recently had a huge increase in playtime snacks coming into school that do not fit within our policy.

A reminder of our Health Eating & Drinking Policy at Ashwell:

- Children should always have a water bottle in school that contains water only.
- ALL break time snacks **must** be a piece of fruit or vegetable (fresh/dried) or a healthy alternative.
- Children **must not** have any form of sweets or chocolate bars in their packed lunches.

We also have a number of children with various food allergies in school and ask that parents **do not** include food items with nuts or sesame seeds in your child's packed lunch or snack.

Thank you for your support with this.

We actively encourage children to come to school with a water bottle each day. Can we please ask that the water bottle is named and that children only have **water**. We have already noticed some children bringing in bottles of juice.



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



School Governors

At the end of last term, we said goodbye to the following members of the Governing Body. A huge thank you to all of them for their dedication and commitment during their time with us.

- Mr. Busby – Co-opted Governor & Ex Parent
- Mrs. Clark – Staff Governor
- Mrs. Pitkethley – Parent Governor
- Mrs. Chambers – Clerk

We have welcomed the following members to our Governing Body in their place:

Mrs. Cooke – Parent Governor
Mrs. Bosch – Parent Governor
Miss Meehan – Staff Governor
Mrs. Kemp – Co-opted Governor
Miss Carroll – Clerk

School Development Priorities



This year our main school development priorities are:

Main Priority 1: To further refine the provision that effectively supports the progress of learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), fostering greater independence and self-motivation.

Main Priority 2: To continue to raise the attainment of pupils in writing across the school.

Main Priority 3: To develop high-quality subject leadership skills across the school, ensuring the effective implementation and embedding of the curriculum and new schemes of work.

Donate a Book to our Library

LIST UPDATED - 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/OR6HXLXLA>



School Council 2025-26

During the early part of the term, children were invited to put themselves forward to be class representatives and form our 2025-26 school council. Following class elections, I am delighted to be able to share with you our new school council for this year:

- Executive Rep & Chair – Hector S / Phoebe C (Year 6)
- Year 6 – Aoife L / Toby K
- Year 5 – Amora W / Lennon K
- Year 4 – Jessica R / Hugo H
- Year 3 – Wilf W / Evie F
- Year 2 – Polly F / Ozzie G



Already this term, our older members have been active. They have visited the War Memorial to help place 54 crosses in preparation for Remembrance Sunday. They will also be involved in the village service and act of Remembrance, placing a Wreath at the memorial on behalf of the school.



Attendance

Our current whole school attendance figure so far this year is 98.0%. This is slightly above this time last year and remains well above the national average.

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

Class	%
Year 1	99.2%
Oak (Reception)	98.2%
Year 6	98.2%
Year 2	98.1%
Year 5	98.0%
Year 3	97.7%
Year 4	97.0%
Acorn (Nursery)	94.2%

Congratulations to Year 1 who finish the half term with the best class attendance.



Attendance Matters



Teaching Assistant CPD Day

On Thursday 25th September, our Teaching Assistants took part in a virtual TA Training Day, accessing sessions led by a wide range of specialist advisors from Herts for Learning. They added even more practical tips and strategies to their already well-stocked TA 'toolboxes', supporting our school's main priority of developing SEND provision.

As part of the day, we also celebrated National Support Staff Appreciation Day with some well-deserved treats and shared your wonderful messages of thanks – these were very much appreciated!

Education Support Staff



Year 6 Sports Ambassadors

We are delighted to announce our 8 newly elected Year 6 Sports Ambassadors for this academic year. To be chosen, each pupil wrote and presented a speech before taking part in a full election process. Their enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment to promoting sport and healthy lifestyles really shone through.

This talented team will be working closely with Miss Meehan to support the running of PE across the school, as well as beginning their leadership training with the North Herts School Sport Partnership. We are very excited to see the positive impact they will have as role models and leaders throughout the year.



PTA Updates

A huge thank you to everyone who supported the recent PTA Pumpkin competition. Lots of fun was had by all.

Upcoming Dates

Saturday 8th November – Fireworks

The PTA are proud to present Ashwell School PTA Fireworks display again this year! Last year we had a sell-out event. We are expecting even more interest this year, for this reason, we strongly recommend you get your Tickets asap! **Note: there will be no ticket sales on the gate this year.**

<https://fireworks.ashwellpta.co.uk/>

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

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/ashwellschool/>

Year 4 – Zoological Centre

Year 4 were lucky to be able to visit the Zoological Education Centre to immerse themselves into what life would be like in the rainforest as part of their Rainforest topic! The centre houses a natural rainforest biome where we were able to experience the humidity of a rainforest as well as look at the types of plants and trees that grow there. We could see the layers of the rainforest come to life that include: The emergent layer; The Canopy Layer, The Understory and The Forest Floor.

The day also allowed us to meet and interact with many animals that would be found in Rainforests all over the world! There were FAR TOO MANY to name them all but some of the class's favourites included: axolotls, snakes, lizards, alligators, frogs, parrots, monkeys, lemurs, tortoises, and capybaras! We learnt about each animal's level of extinction and how the centre was helping to try and prevent these animals from becoming extinct.



Scholastic Book Club

Our new Scholastic Book Club is up and running! Leaflets went home with the children earlier this week. Go to:

<https://schools.scholastic.co.uk/ashwell/digital-book-club>

to browse the latest books and order online. **For every £1 you spend on this month's Book Club, our school will earn 20p in Scholastic Rewards.**

Please place your order online by **October 31st 2025.**



Year 5/6 Netball Friendly

This week our Year 5 and 6 pupils took part in their first netball friendly of the year. It was a fantastic opportunity for the children to experience match play ahead of the upcoming competitions and tournaments later this term. All players showed great teamwork, enthusiasm and skill throughout the game. It was wonderful to see them put their training into practice and enjoy the chance to play together. Well done to everyone who took part!



Alfi & Avie – Fundraising

A huge congratulations to Alfi and Avie who held a bake and toy sale where they sold their own baked goods and sold their preloved toys to raise money for the brain cancer charity. They had originally set themselves a target of £100 and managed to smash this by some distance, raising an amazing £506 in total.

Well done girls, we are all very proud of you!



Reception – Forest Friday Learning

Oak Class had an exciting start to Friday when they received a special letter from Hattie the Hedgehog asking for help building homes for her and her friends to hibernate in. The children were thrilled and quickly put their learning about hibernation into action, creating cosy hedgehog houses. Inspired to take it further, they made maps, wrote letters back to Hattie, and drew pictures for her to keep!



Year 4 Netball Friendly

Our Year 4 netball team took part in their very first friendly match at St Francis! Having only had four after school club sessions prior to the match, the children were coached through their first real game and did an amazing job. It was a fantastic opportunity to learn while playing and to experience a match against another school. Miss Meehan was extremely proud of how every child got involved, showed great enthusiasm, and gave it their all. We're very excited to see how their netball skills continue to grow! It was also lovely to see a past pupil taking part too!



Year 6 Ancient Greek Workshop

Our recent Greek workshop was an exciting journey back in time to ancient Athens! We spent the morning experiencing life as true Athenians, exploring the bustling marketplace and trying our hands at a variety of crafts.

Everyone enjoyed making and decorating clay pots, inking intricate designs onto mosaics, carving traditional Greek symbols, and even mixing herbal potions to cure some of the children who developed sudden illnesses!

In the afternoon, we learned and performed two tragedies, and a comedy based on well-known Greek myths, bringing legendary characters and stories to life.

It was a fantastic day full of creativity, teamwork, and hands-on learning, which was a wonderful way to discover more about our Ancient Greek topic this term.



ANTON – Free Learning Platform

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ANTON makes learning easy and fun.

The platform offers personalised learning that enables you to progress at your own pace and level, unlocking games and rewards along the way.

With a comprehensive curriculum across key subjects, learners can practice, improve, and gain confidence throughout their school journey.

ANTON strives for equitable digital learning. Our core teaching and learning content is always free for everyone. https://anton.app/en_gb/



SEND Updates

With the ever-growing and evolving needs around SEND nationally, our school – like many others in the area – has made SEND and Inclusion the main priority in our School Development Plan this year.

We are excited to work in partnership with teachers, support staff, parents, and most importantly, the children, to further strengthen our school's provision and support for learners with different needs. This work benefits all children, as inclusive strategies and high-quality teaching raise outcomes across the whole school. We already have a wide range of training and development opportunities booked in and are collaborating with other schools to share best practice.

Our first SEND Coffee Morning was a great success, and we would really encourage all parents to come along to future sessions – even if your child does not have SEND – as it is so important for everyone in our school community to be involved and build a shared understanding.



PE Kit & Uniform Reminders

We know that many of you will be looking to purchase new school uniforms over the summer. Please can we ask that you check our uniform policy carefully prior to ordering or buying new uniform.

<https://www.ashwell.herts.sch.uk/uniform>

IMPORTANT – PE Kit

A reminder that PE kit should comprise of the following ONLY:

- ✓ Navy tracksuit bottoms / leggings / shorts* / skirt
- ✓ Plain white T-shirt
- ✓ Plain trainers
- ✓ Navy tracksuit top

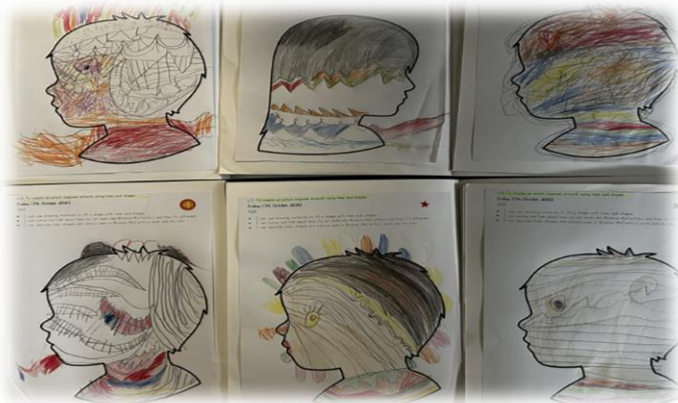
***Please note that shorts should NOT be cycling or gymnast type shorts and need to be of an appropriate length (see below the expected style)**



A reminder that children DO NOT need bags or rucksacks. A simple book bag and drawstring PE kit is all that is needed. This will help keep our classrooms clear and tidy.

Year 1 Learning

This half term, Year 1 have settled into their new classes wonderfully! Our topic has been *Castles and Dragons*, and the children have enjoyed learning how castles were built to keep people safe from attack and designing their own castles with this in mind. In English, we've been busy writing our own stories inspired by *Puffin Peter* and creating colour poems with adjectives. In Maths, the children have been exploring numbers up to 10 - learning how numbers can look different but still mean the same amount. We have also explored addition and subtraction up to 20. In Art, we've been amazed by the children's fantastic work using lines and shapes to create imaginative designs. What a brilliant start to the year, Year 1!



Speed Awareness Competition

Last Year, Year 4 took part in a speed awareness competition with PCSO Brabrook with the support of the Parish Council. We are now able to share that the winning design was Bea B. Congratulations Bea, your sign will shortly be up around the village!



Wellbeing Ambassadors

Each week, Miss Sohal and Mrs. Andrews run 'Chill and Chat' a lunchtime club where children can come to discuss any worries they might have. We are excited to announce that we have recruited ten Year 6 Wellbeing Ambassadors, who will be working alongside the adults, to support our younger children during Chill and Chat each Wednesday. They will also be helping us to arrange whole school events, such as Anti-Bullying Week and Children's Mental Health Week. Congratulations to: Ben, Callum, Casey, Connie, Harry, Isabella, James, Jordan, Lucas and Nathan.

View the latest newsletter here:

<https://www.ashwell.herts.sch.uk/mental-health>

Alfie's Adventures – My First Half Term at Ashwell!

Hello Ashwell... My name is Alfie, and I am a new member of staff / School Dog here at Ashwell Primary School! I am a golden Labrador who is so excited to be part of this amazing school community, and I promise to be the best furry friend you could ask for. During school hours I will be spending a lot of time helping Mr. England and the staff with a variety of jobs including: being a listening ear (and as everybody knows, dogs can hear a lot better than humans); reading support and small intervention groups. Some days, I may join a class for a lesson or two if it will enrich the experience in some way or I may go out at breaktimes to see whether anyone will let me join in with their play. You may also catch me on the gates to greet you in the mornings or to wag my tail at you when you leave at the end of the day.

A lot of research studies have shown the benefits of having dogs like me in schools. Did you know dogs have been working in schools across the UK for over 5 years? However, they have been in American and Australian schools for a lot longer than that. My furry friends and I are great for lots of proven benefits, such as:

- ✓ Cognitive development – companionship with a dog stimulates memory, problem-solving, game-playing and can improve reading skills.
- ✓ Emotional development – a school dog improves self-esteem, acceptance from others and lifts mood, often provoking laughter and fun. Dogs can also teach compassion and respect for other living things as well as relieving anxiety.
- ✓ Physical development – interaction with a pet reduces blood pressure, provides tactile stimulation, assists with pain management, gives motivation to move, walk and stimulates the senses.
- ✓ Environmental benefits – a dog in a school contributes towards the creation of home style environment, with all of the above benefits continuing long after the school day is over.
- ✓ Social benefits – a dog provides a positive mutual topic for discussion, encourages responsibility, wellbeing, developing social skills and focused interaction with others.

I have absolutely loved meeting each one of you and becoming your pawsome school buddy!





PARENT INFORMATION SESSION



Find out how we support children across our school



Friday 21st November



2:00 pm



School hall

Come along to an interactive session where Mrs Andrews and our Teaching Assistant team will

- Share the learning and pastoral interventions we offer
- Model how interventions are run
- Provide practical resources and strategies used in school

This session is open to all parents and carers – not just those of children with SEND.

Many children benefit from a little extra support at different times, and this is a great chance to see what that looks like in practice.



Zones of Regulation



Morph Mastery



Forward with Phonics



UCAN2 Maths



Sensory Circuits



Drawing and Talking

Please note: This is not a time to discuss individual children, but to learn more about the support available. If you'd like to talk about your child specifically, please arrange a separate meeting.

Ashwell School PTA

FIREWORKS

SATURDAY 8TH NOVEMBER

AT ASHWELL TENNIS CLUB 4.30 to 7PM

**HOT FOOD • BAR
MUSIC • FAIR RIDES**

FIREWORKS ESTIMATED START TIME 5.45PM

ADULT £9 CHILD £5 AGE 3 & UNDER FREE

FAMILY 2X ADULTS 2X CHILD £26

FAMILY 2X ADULTS 3X CHILD £30

**GET YOUR TICKETS NOW AT:
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ANY QUESTIONS EMAIL US AT FIREWORKS@ASHWELLPTA.CO.UK



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TO OUR SPONSORS**



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




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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For 7-12 year olds
(School Years 3-7)



An effective & fun therapeutic mobile intervention improving pupil anxiety

- ★ Instant access through a mobile app
- ★ **Based on highly effective Cognitive Behavioural Therapy**
- ★ Helps breakdown fears and worries into manageable steps
- ★ Development funded by the NHS



Medicines & Healthcare products Regulatory Agency



Helps pupils learn life-long skills to self-manage worries and build resilience



Get Access

Available across Hertfordshire as part of With YOUTH (Children & Young People's Digital Wellbeing Service)

To find out more visit: www.withyouth.org/lumi-nova

or Scan QR code to sign up for instant access to Lumi Nova now.



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



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%



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.

