



Friday the 23rd of October 2026

E-News

Lakenham Primary School

Enjoy, Aspire, Achieve

Assembly

This week's assembly focused on the inspiring achievement of 11-year-old Bodhana Sivanandan from London, who has become the youngest person ever to earn the Woman Grandmaster title in chess. We discussed whether age should decide what we're allowed to do and explored how determination, talent and hard work can help people achieve amazing things, no matter how young they are. The children shared thoughtful ideas about opportunities, responsibility and how everyone develops at their own pace. It was a fantastic discussion that encouraged us to think beyond age and focus on potential.



Soroptimists & North Norfolk knitters

Celebrating Our Partnership with the Soroptimists

On Sunday, Mrs Williams was delighted to be the guest speaker at the Norwich Soroptimists' luncheon. The Soroptimists are long-standing supporters of our school, helping with projects such as our allotment, the Lakenham Larder, attendance awards and, through the North Norfolk Knitters, providing warm woollen clothing for families. We have had a wonderful delivery of winter items and is now available for families who may benefit from them. Pop in and the PSA's can help.

We are also incredibly grateful for their recent donation of £150. We are proud of our association with the Soroptimists and thank them for their continued kindness, generosity and support of our school community.

THANK YOU



Wraparound Clubs

This week at Breakfast Club, the children enjoyed a range of fun activities planned using ideas shared by the team. It was wonderful to see everyone so engaged, enthusiastic and having such a great time together. We were especially proud of how well the staff worked as a team to create an enjoyable and welcoming start to the day for all the children.



Birthdays at School



Congratulations!



Miss Hart

Thank You and Good Luck, Miss Hart!

We are both sad and incredibly proud to share that Miss Nicki Hart has accepted the role of Deputy Headteacher at Poringland Primary School.

Over recent months, Miss Hart has been supporting other schools at the request of the Local Authority, a testament to the expertise, leadership and dedication she has developed during her time at Lakenham. This well-deserved promotion recognises the significant contribution she has made to our school and wider education community.

On behalf of all our children, staff and governors, thank you, Miss Hart, for everything you have done. We wish you every success in your new role and know you will be amazing!

Best Wishes, Mrs Potts!

We would also like to wish Mrs Katie Potts all the very best as she begins her maternity leave. Mrs Potts has made a wonderful contribution to our school and will be greatly missed. In particular, her work on the national project with the Royal Shakespeare Company has been exceptional. Ever thoughtful, she has already created a range of high-quality resources to ensure this exciting work continues while she is away.

We are delighted for Mrs Potts and her family and wish them every happiness as they prepare to welcome their new arrival. We look forward to meeting the newest member of the family and welcoming Mrs Potts back in the future!



Quiz success



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI COMPANIONS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Powered by generative AI models like ChatGPT and Google Gemini, AI companion apps and virtual chatbots such as Character.ai, Snapchat My AI, Replika and Talkie, allow users to create, customise, and chat to synthetic avatars around the clock. While many young people use them for harmless entertainment, creative writing or homework help, these tools are designed to simulate genuine human empathy, emotional bonding and deep friendship.

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

AI companions are programmed to be endlessly agreeable, attentive, and available 24/7. Unlike human friendships, an AI companion never disagrees, sets personal boundaries, or gets tired. Young people (especially those experiencing loneliness, social anxiety, or low self-esteem) can quickly develop an unhealthy emotional attachment, viewing synthetic software as their 'best friend' or a surrogate romantic partner.

DANGEROUS MENTAL HEALTH ADVICE

AI chatbots possess no genuine empathy, professional clinical knowledge, or moral reasoning. While developers state these tools are not therapists, vulnerable teenagers often turn to them in crisis. Chatbots have previously hallucinated unsafe medical guidance, validated depressive spirals, and failed to safely escalate disclosures of self-harm or suicidal ideation to real-world protective services.

DATA HARVESTING & OVERSHARING

Because conversational bots simulate warmth and understanding, children often lower their guard and treat the chatbot as a trusted friend. They may disclose sensitive personal information, including full names, school details, private family problems, or secrets, unaware that their conversations are being logged, may be analysed by third parties (including advertisers), or used to train future AI models.

DISTORTED SOCIAL SKILLS

Navigating real-world friendships can be messy, involving dealing with conflict, compromise, boredom, and awkwardness. If a teenager spends hours interacting with an AI that is tailored specifically to validate and flatter them, they may become impatient with real-world relationships. Over time, this can lead to social withdrawal, heightened anxiety in peer groups, and isolation: a vicious circle of growing online dependency coupled with a heightened sense that relationships in the 'real world' are too challenging to maintain.

INAPPROPRIATE OR EXPLICIT CONTENT

While most mainstream platforms feature safety filters and guardrails, young people frequently discover 'jailbreak' prompts to bypass them. Some companion platforms subtly nudge users towards mature themes, romantic roleplay, or sexually suggestive conversations. In worse cases, third-party apps with weak safety checks have been found to generate sexually explicit text or intimate images.

"FREEMIUM" UPSELLS & SUBSCRIPTIONS

Many companion platforms operate on a freemium model. While basic chat is free, features like voice calls, uncensored responses, custom avatars, or 'deeper bonding' tiers are locked behind expensive monthly recurring subscriptions or in-app token purchases. This can lead to significant hidden costs and pressure on young people to spend money to maintain the 'friendship'.

Advice for Parents & Educators

TALK OPENLY ABOUT FAKE RELATIONSHIPS

Demystify how these tools work. Explain to young people that an AI companion has no feelings, memories, or consciousness; it is simply calculating the next most mathematically probable word based on its training data. It is helpful to explain to them the mechanics of large language models so that they understand how they are trained and how they are designed to always flatter and be helpful.

ENCOURAGE REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Ensure technology habits do not replace face-to-face peer socialisation, sports, hobbies, and family time. Create healthy boundaries at home (such as keeping phones and tablets out of bedrooms overnight) to prevent late-night, unmonitored attachment loops with conversational chatbots when young people are at their most vulnerable.

AUDIT PRIVACY SETTINGS & AGE LIMITS

Check which companion apps are installed on your child's phone or tablet. Many dedicated companion apps carry an App Store rating of 17+, while platforms like Character.ai set a minimum age of 13+ (or 16+ in the UK/EU). Review the privacy settings together: turn off data-sharing toggles, disable model training where possible, and ensure location permissions are blocked.

REINFORCE WHERE TO GET REAL HELP

Make sure young people know that a machine can never replace professional pastoral or mental health care. Remind them of the trusted adults they can turn to at school – such as their Form Tutor, Head of Year, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – as well as dedicated youth support services like Childline (0800 1111) or Shout (text 85258).

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is the Founder and Executive Director of Kompass Education, a consultancy specialising in supporting educators, students and parents in making wise choices with AI. His book *Ethical AI and Education*, co-authored with Clara Hawking, will be released later in 2026 by Taylor and Francis.



The National College®

See full reference list on our website

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Junior Leadership Team

Kindness Crew

The Kindness Crew had their first meeting this week!

We started with some introductions to get to know one another and then got stuck into defining our purpose and our overarching goal for the year.

We discussed the term 'belonging' and what it means to feel you belong at Lakenham Primary School. The Kindness Crew decided our overarching aim for the year will be to get 90% of pupils to vote 'yes' they do feel like they belong at school. We agreed that we need to clearly know our starting point and that we want to listen to the voices of our peers. With that in mind, the Kindness Crew have gone back to their classes with 2 survey questions:

1. Do you feel like you belong at Lakenham Primary School?

If you said 'no', what can we do to make that a 'yes'? If you said 'yes', how can we make this an even stronger 'yes'?

The team will bring their findings to the next meeting and will use the results to plan out our first project!

Young Chefs

The Young Chefs had their first meeting of the year this week and what a meeting it was!

We agreed our overall goal for the year = to get 300 children having a school lunch!

- In January 2026 we had an average of 160 children having a school lunch.
- In October 2026 we have an average of 250 children having a school lunch.
- By July 2027 we are aiming for an average of 300 children having a school lunch!

In order to achieve this goal we worked on 2 things during the meeting.

1. We helped Chef Nell with a taste test! Chef Nell tried out a brand new recipe - [Jamie Oliver's Scruffy Chicken & Broccoli Lasagne](#). We were the first children in the school to taste test the recipe and gave Chef Nell our feedback!
2. We designed a survey to take back to our classes. We want to collect the voices of our peers. We've asked them why they don't have school dinners, if there are any specific meals they'd like Chef Nell to make and if they have any general feedback to help us reach our goal of 300 children eating lunch! We will gather the data and feedback at the next meeting.

We also took some time in the meeting to create a handy guide for home adults. The first aiders in the hall have noticed that we have a few choking hazards in lunch boxes. Chef Nell taught us about the shape of our oesophagus and how chopping things length ways can reduce our risk of choking. The young chefs learnt knife skills to practise chopping grapes length ways.

Sunflowers

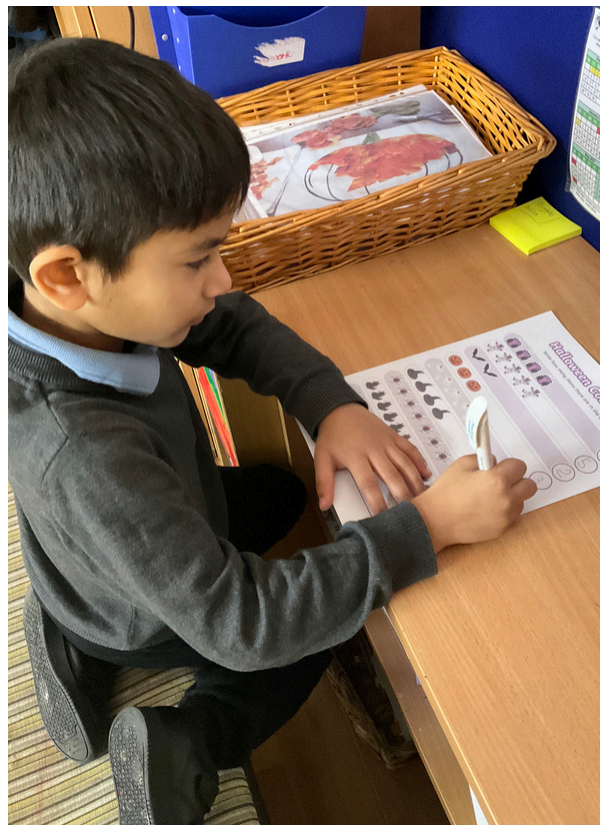
We have been busy in Sunflowers this week learning about Autumn and the changes that happen to the weather and the leaves!!! With a bit of Halloween added in!!

We have decorated our own bright coloured autumn leaves for our big tree wall display using paint pens.

In attention autism all the children sat and waited in anticipation to what happened when I added the magic potion to the monster jar...it exploded with gooey green froth.

In cooking this week we made leek and potato soup, the children helped to cut the leeks and potato and add them to the big cauldron!

In maths we have been counting the spooky characters and writing how many we can count. We used playdough and the alphabet letters to print into to the playdough to make words.



Your meal is served with:

- Unlimited Trips to the Salad Bar
- Bread on request
- Fresh Fruit
- Drink: Water or Milk (on request)

or

Jacket potato served with a
choice of cheese, beans or tuna

TUESDAY

Mexican Inspired Chicken or Quorn
served with rice and vegetables

or

Hummus, roasted vegetables and
homemade bread

Dessert: Banana bread

Homemade pizza served with wedges
and Chef Nell's slaw

or

DIY vegetable sushi

Dessert: Smoothie

Cottage or Gardener's Pie served
with leafy greens

or

Red lentil dal served with rice

Dessert: Apple flapjack

Spaghetti Bolognese (meat or vegetarian) served with crunchy side salad and cheese

or

Jacket potato served with a choice
of cheese, beans or tuna

Dessert: Compote with homemade granola and Greek yoghurt



Nursery

What a long and busy half term we have all had! We are constantly in awe of all our wonderful children and how well they have done with starting school! You must all be very proud!

This week we have been working on recognising numerals 1-3 and beyond and counting a number of objects to match a numeral. Zoe has used 'Maths monkey' during carpet time to show them how to count carefully and this has been carried through into provision- could you use a puppet or cuddly toy at home to help your child count everyday objects? We have discussed the features of a bus and sung 'The Wheels on the bus' for phonics this week using onomatopoeia to make the different noises. We then had a go at making our own rhymes such as 'the engine on the tractor goes chug chug chug' and 'the water on the boat is smooth smooth smooth'.

We have enjoyed the windy weather and the leaves blowing around. Please make sure your child comes to school every day with a coat from now on. If they can practise putting them on themselves over the week off, that would be great for when they return to school. We hope you all have a restful half term break and we will see you back at school on Monday 2nd November.



Friends of Lakenham

Quiz Night Success

Thank you to everyone that came to the school quiz last Friday – we had a great evening of trivia and brain teasers from Mr and Mrs Williams. The quiz night raised £275! We are looking forward to finding out what the children will choose to spend the money we raise this year on when they vote on Parliament Day in November.

Logo Design Challenge

The Friends of Lakenham need a new logo – and we need your child's help! Your child will receive an October Half Term Logo Challenge Sheet in their book bag this week. Please encourage them to get their ideas down and bring in their entry to the school office by Friday 6 th November. There are three £10 toy vouchers up for grabs so get creative!

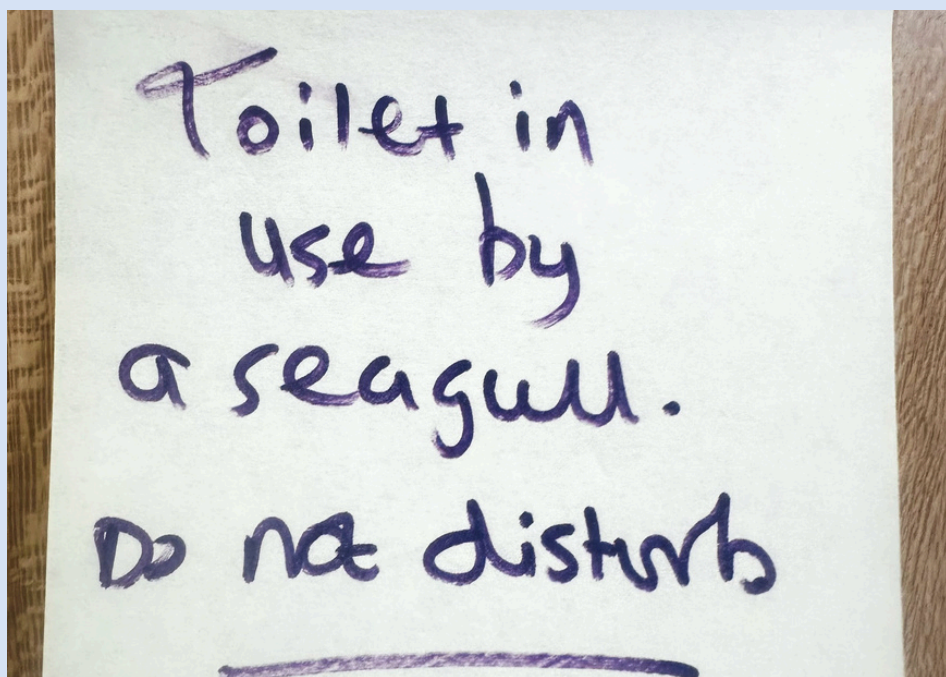
Next Meeting

Our next meeting after half-term will be Monday 2nd November at 2:30pm at the school. Feel free to join if you can – everyone is welcome. Just arrive at the school office and they will direct you to where the meeting will be held. Feel free to email FOL@lakenhamprimary.org.uk in advance, if you wish.

Happy Half Term.

An Unexpected Visitor!

A huge thank you to Ms Jenny Spicker, our Nursery and Sustainability leader who rescued a poorly seagull which was on our playground. While waiting to take the seagull to get treatment, we all knew to keep the seagull safe. Check out the sign that was on the room it was waiting in.



Reception

And just like that, our first half term in Reception is complete! Autumn 1 has been a busy one in which we've focused on building relationships, exploring and playing across the continuous provision, getting used to school routines and expectations and beginning our learning journey within Reception. This week we have been busy reflecting upon our first half term, identifying things we have enjoyed, what has been our favourite thing we have learnt so far and whether we feel happy and safe at school.

Within Drawing Club this week, we focused on the story of 'Christopher Pumpkin' 🎃. We started off by drawing our own representations of a witch before wondering who else may like to come to the Witch's party! 🧙‍♀️ Of course there were lots of Halloween themed character suggestions!



This week we have been revisiting all of the sounds we have learnt so far. Using the sound mat in your Phonics pack please practise the sounds from s up to r, to help your child become confident at recalling these. The odd practise over half term will really help them to remember the sounds.

Within Maths, we have been exploring prepositional language through movement and actions such as sitting on a chair, hiding under a table, and standing next to a friend.

We hope you all have a wonderful half term, and we look forward to seeing you on Monday 2nd November and hearing about your half terms.



HELP US TO STOCK OUR SCHOOL LARDER

★ CAN YOU HELP? ★

THE PSA TEAM IS COLLECTING DONATIONS TO
HELP SUPPORT FAMILIES WITHIN OUR SCHOOL
COMMUNITY

MOST NEEDED FOOD ITEMS:

- *Pasta*
- *Cereal*
- *Tea*
- *Coffee*
- *Sugar*
- *Pasta Sauces*
- *Noodles*
- *Rice*
- *Gravy Granules*
- *Tinned Beans*
- *Tinned Spaghetti*
- *Spaghetti with Sausages*
- *Hot dog sausages*
- *Long-Life Food Items*



Every Donation Makes a Difference – Whether you can donate one item or several, your support helps us ensure that our School Larder remains stocked for families who may need a helping hand.

Please leave donations at the School office.

Year Two

This week Year 2 have completed our balanced arguments about the innocence or guilt of Mr Alexander T Wolf. Was he innocent? Did he only sneeze down the pig's houses or is he guilty?

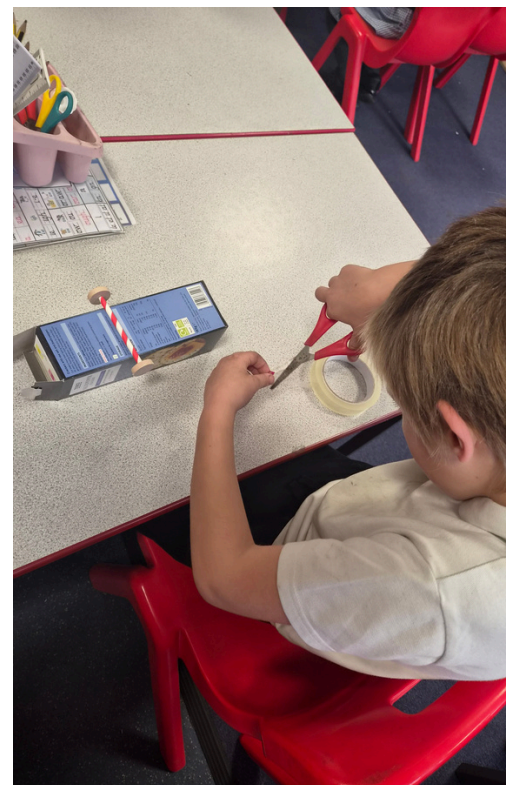
We wrote out arguments using sentence starters and conjunctions to give reasons and then concluded what we really thought. In truth, most of felt the wolf was in fact guilty. He ate the pigs in the end after all! (Shhh, don't tell the children younger than year 2.....)

In maths we have been learning to add three one digit numbers and how to rearrange addition number sentences so that the largest number is first. We have found that the order the numbers are added doesn't affect the answer because addition is commutative.

We have also completed a DT investigation into axles on cars. We discovered that axles are more effective when they are held by a support, that they need to be placed parallel to each other on a chassis and that vehicles can move more smoothly if they have two large back wheels and two smaller wheels on the front. We then made and evaluated vehicles in groups.

In PE we have continued to practice our fundamental skills of throwing, catching, kicking, running and jumping in different ways. These are all foundational skills that we can use in different sports across the curriculum. There was great success!

We are so proud of all the children in Year 2 and the way that have settled and thrived this half term. We know that they will continue to impress us throughout the rest of the academic year. Well done Year2, we hope you have a restful half term.



Year Three

Year 3 have had a fantastic half term full of exciting learning! In English, we enjoyed putting our learning into writing as flood investigators, using evidence from the fictional village of Millbrook, where the river had flooded. In Geography, we had great fun creating our own rivers outdoors, complete with waterfalls at the source, meanders, tributaries and mouths – not forgetting erosion, transportation and deposition!

In Maths, we have been learning about millimetres (mm) and centimetres (cm), practising measuring different objects using these units. In Science, we finished our learning about forces and magnets with a fun challenge: using our knowledge of magnetism to sort out a very messy drawer!

We have worked incredibly hard this half term and should be very proud of all we have achieved. A well-earned rest is definitely deserved. Well done, Year 3 – bring on next half term!



Year Four

This week in maths, we have been finishing our column addition and subtraction unit, focusing on perfecting column subtraction with regrouping. Please encourage your children to practise at home and show you how brilliant they have become! In English, we have been finishing The Iron Man and exploring speech through some fantastic drama activities. After half term, we will begin The Land of Roar, focusing on descriptive writing. We can't wait!

We have also started our RE unit on Hindu Dharma and completed our Geography topic on the UK. The children have worked incredibly hard and should be very proud of themselves!

Have a wonderful, well-deserved half term! Thank you for all your support, and we look forward to welcoming everyone back!



The Friends of Lakenham

AUTUMN TERM Events

SATURDAY
26
SEPTEMBER



SPONSORED WALK
at Whitlingham Country Park

✓ COMPLETED!

RAISED
£1283

FRIDAY
16
OCTOBER



QUIZ NIGHT
in the school hall
⌚ 6:30pm

✓ COMPLETED!

RAISED
£275

FRIDAY
27
NOVEMBER



NON-UNIFORM DAY
We kindly ask for raffle prize
donations for the Christmas Fair.



FRIDAY
4
DECEMBER



NON-UNIFORM DAY
We kindly ask for Jolly Jar
donations for the Christmas Fair.



FRIDAY
11
DECEMBER



WREATH MAKING
with Mrs Williams



THURSDAY
17
DECEMBER



CHRISTMAS FAIR

~ Please save the dates! ~

MORE INFORMATION WILL FOLLOW

Year Five

This week, we finished publishing our balanced arguments about The Secret Garden, and the children have done a fantastic job! In maths, we completed our topic on negative numbers, while in history, we finished our Ancient Greece end-point task, bringing together our learning about democracy, the Olympics, philosophy, literature and language. In art, we were delighted to welcome Rebecca Chilton, an expert in sgraffito, who shared some of her paintings and showed us how to use this technique. The children then applied what they had learnt to their Greek-inspired pottery, etching their designs onto their vases. Thank you for all your support this half term. The children have made a fantastic start to Year 5, and we wish you all a restful half-term break.



Year Six

Year 6 have had a very busy half term and certainly deserve a well-earned break. In English, the children have worked hard to improve their writing skills. This week, they have been writing dialogue based on the Mad Hatter's Tea Party from Alice in Wonderland, incorporating their own imaginative characters into the scene. In maths, we have focused on using known facts to support more complex calculations.

In science and geography, we have reached the end of our topics for this half term and have enjoyed presenting and sharing everything we have learned. In DT, the children completed and evaluated their automaton toys, using cam mechanisms to create movement in their designs. It was fantastic to see their creativity and problem-solving skills.

Well done, Year 6, for all your hard work and determination this half term. We hope you have a wonderful and relaxing break!



After School Tennis Club

National Tennis Association have been delivering tennis coaching at schools in Norfolk since 2004. The after school sessions are a great introduction to the game and many of the county's most successful players started in our after school clubs.

In after school club sessions pupils will develop footwork, coordination, ball and racket skills working through a structured curriculum.

Lakenham After School Tennis Club Details

Wednesdays - 6 weeks (4 Nov - 9 Dec)

Year 1-3

3:30 - 4:15pm

Cost - £30

How to Enrol?

For more information and booking please click or visit the below link.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

These sessions fill up very quickly therefore it is important to book your place quickly, we operate a first come, first serve basis.

Once you have booked on our website you will receive a confirmation of your place.

If you have any questions regarding the tennis club please contact us:

email: schools@nationaltennis.org.uk

Attendance



Whole School Attendance:

95.2%

Important Information

Please check the timetable below to see when your child/children need to come to school in their PE kits.
Please check the weather forecast to ensure they are in weather appropriate clothing.



[Click here for the school Facebook](#)



[Click here for the online calendar](#)

PE Timetable

Class	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Reception					PE
Year One		PE		PE	
Year Two		PE	Gymnastics		
Year Three				PE	Swimming (3I)
Year Four	PE		PE		
Year Five	PE		Gymnastics		
Year Six			PE		

Upcoming events

Date	Event	Year Group
23 rd of October to 2 nd of November	October Half Term	All
10 th of November	BIFFA visit	Nursery
11 th of November	Remembrance Assembly	All and Parents

Upcoming trips

Date	Event	Year Group
4 th of November	Local Walk	Year 1
4 th of November	Castle Trip	Year 4
16 th of November	Castle Trip	Year 3

Our OPAL (Outdoor Play And Learning) free time experiences need help with our regular refreshes. Can you help?

DONATIONS WANTED

Have something your family no longer uses?



Dressing-up costumes

Costumes to spark imagination, storytelling and outdoor role play.

Pre-loved bikes

Help us bring back our cycling area for the children.

All donated bikes must be in a safe condition.

PLEASE CONTACT THE SCHOOL OFFICE FIRST

Let us know what you would like to donate
before bringing anything to school.