

APRIL
2026

HALSFORD PARK NEWSLETTER



Email- officehp@partnersinlearning.co.uk

Tel- 01342 324643



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to the April edition of our monthly newsletter. The children have become fully immersed in the summer term learning experiences and have managed to enjoy breaks and lunchtime play on the field!

Children's Booker Prize 2027 – children judges wanted!

The Booker Prize have launched a nationwide competition to find three child judges, aged 8 to 12 to join some famous faces to judge the new Children's book prize <https://thebookerprizes.com/the-childrens-booker-prize>

They are looking for children who are: able to read the eight shortlisted books between November 2026 and January 2027; passionate about stories and reading; confident to talk about what they have read and enthuse other readers; able to consider other people's points of view and work together in a group; and who are imaginative and curious about the world. There are great prizes on offer including from our new partner, Beano: a bespoke portrait by illustrator Nigel Parkinson and a comic strip capturing their judging experience to be published in the magazine.

Please find a [link here](#) to a video of Frank explaining what fun lies ahead for our child judges!

In the online form, children will be asked to share why they would like to be a Children's Booker Prize judge and answer questions about books and reading. Entries for the first round close on 2 June 2026 and full details of the selection process are outlined on the Booker Prizes website (link above). The three child judges will be announced alongside the eight-book shortlist on 24 November.

If you are planning on entering your child/children – please talk to a member of staff so we can complete the form with you.



The Children's Booker Prize 2027 adult judges
From L to R: Lolly Aderogbe, Frank Cottrell-Boyce, Sanchita Basu De Sarkar

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Early Years

The first few weeks of Summer 1 have been full of excitement, creativity, and enthusiasm. We successfully completed our first mission by filling our classrooms with trees made from a variety of materials we could find; showcasing fantastic imagination, resourcefulness, and teamwork. The children took great pride in their creations and it was wonderful to see such a wide range of ideas brought to life.

In Drawing Club, we thoroughly enjoyed exploring *The Lorax*- using it as inspiration to think about the importance of looking after our planet and how we can all make a difference. The children engaged in thoughtful discussions and produced some lovely creations linked to the story.

In PE, we have been busy practising for Sports Day. It has been fantastic to see the children demonstrating excellent team spirit, encouraging one another, and showing great sportsmanship as they cheer each other on. Their positive attitudes have really stood out.

We are now very much looking forward to our upcoming trip to the British Wildlife Centre, which promises to be another exciting experience for everyone!

Year 1

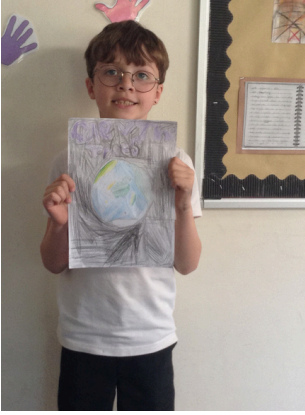
In English, we have been looking at stories which involve an adventure. We have then chosen two characters for our own story and started writing our own adventure story which we will be sharing with Early Years shortly.

In Maths, we have been counting in 2s, 5s and 10s. We have been practising this lots as this is the first step in learning our times tables.



We really enjoyed our science lessons recently where we have been carrying out an experiment on bread. We firstly looked at what germs are and why it is important that we clean our hands. We then had three pieces of bread and touched one of them with dirty hands, one with clean hands and one we did not touch at all. We will be observing the changes over time. These are results from last year. I wonder if you can tell which pieces of bread were touched by which hands. We hope to see our results soon.

Summer term is really busy for us with lots to look forward to. Please make sure you have sports day, our trip to Wakehurst place and our class assemblies in your diaries.



Year 2

In Year 2 we have been busy learning all about fractions in maths. The children have all worked so hard to learn about the numerator and denominator and what these tell us. We will be moving on to learning about time at the end of next week.

In English, the children have written their own versions of 'Greta and the Giants' which we have turned into a class book. We were so impressed with the children's writing and how they used all of their Year 2 writing skills!

In Geography, we have learned about the impact that we can have on the environment and made posters about environmental issues. We have also been learning about the continents and oceans around the world and have practised using an atlas to label these on a map.

The children are working really hard to practise their events for Sports Day as a part of our PE lessons; they can't wait to join in with the races in a few weeks!

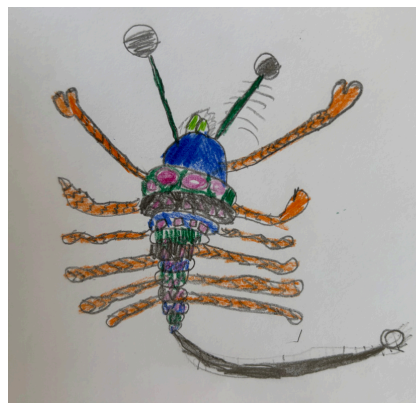
Year 3

We have had a very exciting start to our new Experience 'It's a Bugs' Life', with our Stunning Start, where we went on a bug hunt around school. We also started our swimming and showed how responsible we all are by walking sensibly to the King's Centre and back. Thank you to our fantastic parent helpers!

In Science, our focus question is 'Why are bugs important?' and we have learnt so much already about bugs, insects and their habitats. We have been identifying different bugs and insects and have found out about their lifecycles. We are looking forward to learning so much more about bugs, insects and plants and how they interrelate.

In Maths, we have now finished our unit on measurement and have started our second unit focusing on fractions. We have been adding fractions with the same denominator to find the whole.

In English, we have been finished our writing based on the book "The Flower" and will now be moving on to writing our own "Big Book of Bugs" based on an insect the children themselves have created.





Year 4

Year 4 have had a fantastic start to the term. We have thoroughly enjoyed our learning about digestion, beginning with a hands-on stunning start activity to explore how the digestive system works. In this practical demonstration, we used a mixture of banana, digestive biscuits, and water—where the water represented saliva, orange juice acted as stomach acid, and the food items represented what we eat. We then followed its journey through the different parts of the digestive system.

Our learning has continued across subjects, as we have also been researching the digestive system in English to create our own informative leaflets. Along the way, we have developed our vocabulary, learning new terms such as enzymes, absorb, and chyme. In maths, we have built on our understanding of fractions and are now extending our learning to be able to add and subtract them, making strong links between prior and new learning.



In music, we have started to learn how to play a djembe drum.

In art, we have been exploring the Cubist style, focusing on the work of Pablo Picasso. We have practised drawing self-portraits and are excited to incorporate elements of Cubism into our own creative work.

Year 5

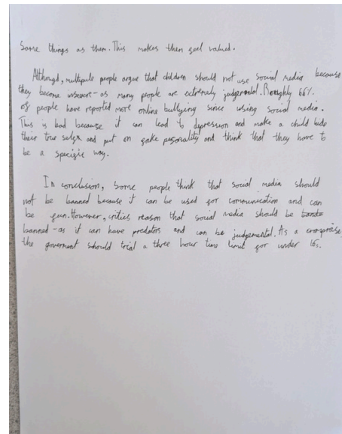
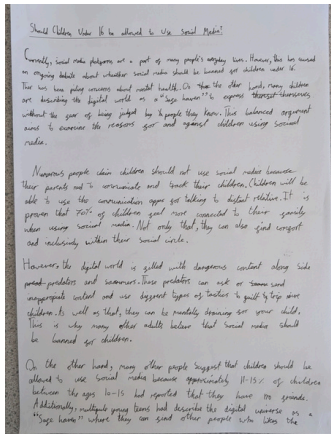
This term year 5 we have enjoyed outdoor learning relating to plants and wildlife in our immediate surroundings. This links to our topic on Darwin and his theory of evolution and natural selection. We have also looked at the parts of a plants and their function in reproduction: seed dispersal and germination. Children spent the afternoon of their stunning start identifying trees from our immediate surroundings and sketching their leaves.



In English, we have begun to write a biography about Darwin and studied his theories. We have also completed writing a piece of fiction based around the book- Darwin's Dragons by Lindsay Galvin. We are using our VIPERS reading strategies to understand some of the more ambitious scientific vocabulary so that we may in turn use it in our own writing.

In PE, the children continue to enjoy Athletics lessons and Stoolball. Many pupils really have got to grips with the skills of javelin, sprinting and throwing. We have some super- speedy sprinters in year 5!

Well done to all our year 5 children who completed the level 1 of their Bikeability - this will hold you in good stead for next year!



Year 6

Year 6 have continued to show great focus and maturity in their learning this term. In English, they have worked hard to draw on their own knowledge and experiences of social media to write thoughtful and balanced arguments discussing whether it should be used by under 16s. It has been impressive to see pupils considering both the benefits and risks, and presenting their ideas clearly and persuasively.

In Maths, the class has been developing their reasoning skills, applying their understanding across a range of different contexts. They are becoming more confident in explaining their thinking and tackling multi-step problems with resilience.

In French, pupils have been learning vocabulary linked to football, building their confidence in speaking and understanding language related to sport.

In PE, Year 6 have been busy preparing for Sports Day, practising a variety of events with enthusiasm and determination. They have also been developing their cricket skills, focusing on teamwork and fielding.

Well done to Year 6 for their continued hard work and positive attitude!

School Council- Diversity Day 22nd May

School Council have been exploring Diversity. At Halsford Park, we aim to develop a culture of equality, inclusion and diversity, celebrating the ways in which we are each different, while highlighting the ways in which we are the same, but understanding more than anything that we should all be treated as equal.

In School Council, we are planning a day to celebrate Equality, Inclusion, Diversity under the heading Everyone Belongs, our tag line is "Don't judge a turtle by their shell." We would like to give the children an opportunity to celebrate their uniqueness throughout the day. This could be a dress up opportunity to celebrate their culture and religion or it could be to celebrate what really interests them, for instance, dressing up as their favourite musician or a job being an astronaut. Children might choose to bring in something to spark a conversation about their uniqueness; this could be, for example, a medal, a special book or a piece of equipment relevant to their interests. Mrs Mackay.

Governing Body news



We are delighted to welcome two new governors to our team. Charlotte Gibson and Mark Treadwell, both parents of pupils at the school, they will be joining us as co-opted governors at our meeting in May. Please see our updated Governor page on our website to read their bios-

<https://halsfordparkprimary.ovw6.devwebsite.co.uk/page/?title=Governors+and+Trustees&pid=140&action=saved>

We have two other applications in the pipeline, which would bring our governing body up to ten members in total, a great number to be able to fully support the school leaders in providing the very best education for your children.

Our board currently comprises of:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Chair - Marcia Goodwin (co-opted governor) | Staff Governor - Julie Manville |
| Vice Chair - Daisy McCallum (parent governor) | Parent Governor - Jason Brooks |
| Headteacher - Claire Spencer | Co-opted Governor- Nicola Anderson |

If you ever have any questions for our governing body we can be contacted via the school office. Marcia Goodwin- Chair of Governors.

SPORTS

Cross Country- 26th March



On Thursday 26th March I met a number of Year 5 and Year 6 children for a cross-country event at Crawley Rugby Club. Following the children's superb performance at the area qualifying event, they qualified to represent the Mid Sussex area at the Sussex 2026 Cross Country Finals. It was a beautiful day and it was very well

attended with over 130 children running in each race. Each of our children ran their hearts out around an unfamiliar track. It included some tricky bits to navigate as the course sometimes narrowed and there was even a bridge to cross! We had fantastic results, our fastest year 5 girl came 78th, our fastest year 5 boy came 39th. In the afternoon we ended with our Year 6 girl coming 51st. Results to make us really proud. Mrs Mackay.

Hockey- 16th April



On the 16th April children from Year 6 took part in the hockey finals at East Grinstead Hockey Club. The children competed in 10 matches across the afternoon competing against teams in West Sussex who had won their local event previously, like we had done. They showed some fantastic hockey skills. The team scored lots of goals and defended lots of goals going in. Out of the 10 games we played we won 4 of them with some fantastic scores. The children showed all the core values and also lots of resilience to keep going even when some games were quite hard. We are very proud of how far they have come in this hockey tournament and getting to the finals. The overall result of the finals are now in and we came 10th out of 11. Well done to all who took part. Mrs Sears.

Get Active- 22nd April

On Wednesday 22nd April a group of 8, Year 5 children and I walked to the Kings Centre to join other schools at an event called Get Active. It was a beautiful day, which was lucky as some of the events were hosted outside. Our Get Active hosts were really keen that the children understand that PE is not just about sports, it's hopefully also the basis of a active, healthy life. The children were fantastic. They were enthusiastic and showed courage trying new activities, which were: Floor Gymnastics, Taekwondo, Kicks Dance, Frisbie Golf and Jolf.



I felt so proud of all the children, especially during Frisbie Golf when the wind was scuppering some potential hole in ones! Mrs Mackay.



Internet Safety - YouTube Kids

This guide examines YouTube Kids, a child-friendly version of the video-sharing giant, and explores the risks that may still persist despite the platform's safety-focused design.

YouTube Kids promises a safe, child-centric experience with colourful visuals, age-filtered content, and robust parental controls. Designed to appeal to younger viewers, the app has grown rapidly, being used by tens of millions of children worldwide. But is it as safe as it seems?

Despite YouTube Kids' safeguards, reports have highlighted worrying issues, such as inappropriate content slipping through filters, subtle advertising, and the use of manipulative design to keep children engaged. This guide explores how to navigate these pitfalls, offering practical advice for making sure children get the most from the platform - without the risks.

Polite safety reminders at pick up

Please can I remind that the use of bikes and scooters are not allowed on school premises to ensure the safety of all our community. Some pre-school children have knocked into members of the community when racing down the drive or around the playground.

Also we attempt to ensure all equipment is put away at the end of the day but if the odd ball is left, please can you refrain from allowing your child/ren from kicking a ball around when our community are waiting to pick up at the end of the day to avoid any accidents.

And finally, if there is a club on a playground at the end of the day, i.e. netball on a Thursday, please can we respectfully ask you leave the KS2 playground once you have collected your child to ensure the club have full access to the playground. Thank you.

We have a busy term ahead so please make sure you note down key dates and events. In the meantime, I hope you have an enjoyable Bank Holiday weekend and we will see you back on Tuesday 5th May.

Thank you for your on-going support,
Claire Spencer - Headteacher



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about YOUTUBE KIDS

AGE RESTRICTION
4+

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

As its name suggests, YouTube Kids is a child-friendly version of Google's online video-sharing platform. Its colourful user interface is designed with young people in mind, and it offers a curated, family-friendly experience with features like age-based content settings and parental controls.

INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT BYPASSING FILTERS

18
CENSORED

YouTube Kids is less likely to show inappropriate material than YouTube, but there have been reports of the app showing age-inappropriate content to young viewers. One investigation found that YouTube Kids had shown videos that promote skin bleaching, weight loss, drug culture and firearms to children as young as two, as inappropriate content had bypassed the platform's algorithms and human moderators.

BE WARY OF ADVERTISING

BUY NOW!

Like Google's regular YouTube app, YouTube Kids features pervasive advertising before a video plays. While these adverts are designed to be family friendly and are subject to a strict review process, it's worth noting that YouTube Kids collects information around children's viewing to inform targeted content and advertisements.

DESIGNED TO BE ADDICTIVE

YouTube Kids is designed to be addictive. The platform's design features, such as the constant stream of new videos and the reward system of points or virtual stickers, can be very engaging and make it difficult for children to switch off. Research has shown that spending too much time using digital services such as YouTube can lead to screen addiction, affecting children's daily routines, studies, and even their social lives.

SETTINGS CAN BE CIRCUMVENTED

YouTube Kids offers built-in parental controls, enabling you to set screen time limits and curate the content children are able to view; however, children are often more tech-savvy than we think. They can easily bypass or tweak these settings if they have access to the associated Google account password, thereby exposing themselves to age-inappropriate and potentially dangerous content.

AI-GENERATED MISINFORMATION

There is also a risk of children accessing videos that contain disinformation and misinformation. A BBC investigation found that some YouTube channels are using artificial intelligence (AI) technology to create misleading 'scientific' videos that are recommended to children as educational content. These videos included conspiracy theories and ideas that lack scientific backing.

DATA COLLECTION RISK

While there are limits on the data that YouTube can collect on children under 13, children can still inadvertently give away sensitive information when using YouTube Kids. The platform collects data on children's viewing habits, content searches and location, which YouTube and third-party advertisers can use.

Advice for Parents & Educators

PARENTAL CONTROLS

YouTube Kids offers several settings that allow you to manage what content children can view. For example, you can choose what level of content you want them to access, such as 'Preschool' or 'Younger'. You can also turn off the search function, so that only those videos approved by the YouTube Kids team themselves will appear on a child's recommendations list.

CHECK WATCH HISTORY

YouTube Kids has made it easy for you to keep an eye on what the children in your care have been watching on the app. By clicking on the 'Recommended' icon at the top right of the home screen, you can see which videos they've been viewing, and how much of each. If a child watches YouTube Kids while signed into a Google account, you can check their history through Google's 'My Activity' page.

SET TIME LIMITS

The built-in parental controls let you keep a tab on how long children spend watching videos. You can set a timer that limits screen time and disables the YouTube Kids app once a specified length of time has been reached. It's also worth speaking to children about the dangers of spending too much time on YouTube, to ensure they remain focused on other, more important activities.

WATCH TOGETHER

It's important that you try to make YouTube Kids a fun and positive experience for children. One way to do this is by introducing watching sessions, where you all gather around and share the most enjoyable videos that you have recently watched. This can be a great way of giving you both new things to talk about and of keeping an eye on what they're watching.

Meet Our Expert

Carly Page is an experienced journalist with more than 10 years of experience covering the technology industry. Previously a senior cybersecurity reporter at TechCrunch, Carly is now a freelance journalist, editor, and copywriter. Her bylines include Forbes, TechRadar, Tes, The INCUBER, The Metro, UsSwitch, and WIR2D.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at <https://www.thenationalcollege.com/guides/youtube-kids-2025>

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Dates for your Diary

May		23rd	Class Photographs
4th	Bank Holiday- School Closed	23rd	New EYs Stay & Play Session 1.15pm
5th	Parent Forum 9.05am	24th	New EYs Stay & Play Session 10am
6th	Early Years- British Wildlife Centre Trip	25th	Year 1- Trip to Wakehurst
11th-14th	Year 6 SATs Week - no teacher led clubs or year 3 swimming	25th	New EYs Stay & Play Session 10am
21st	Sports Day & Family Lunch 9-1pm	26th	New EYs Stay & Play Session 10am
22nd	Diversity Day- non school uniform	July	
22nd	Last Day of Term	1st	Year 6- Imberhorne Induction Day
23rd-31st	Half Term	1st	New EYs Morning Session 10am
June		1st-3rd	Year 6- Sackville Induction Days
1st	Return to School	3rd	PTA- Disco- <i>details to follow</i>
2nd	New Early Years Welcome Meeting 6.30pm	10th	New EYs Story Time 1.30pm
8th	Year 2- Trip to Brighton Beach School	13th	Year 6- Production- Franklin Parents
13th	PTA- Summer Fair 1-4pm	16th	Year 6- Production- Turing Parents
17th	Reserve Sports Day	22nd	Year 6 Leavers Assembly- PM
19th	Transition to Year 1- EYs Parent Workshop 2.30pm	22nd	Last Day of Term
22nd	New EYs Stay & Play Session 10am	Class Assemblies - 9.00- 9.30am	
23rd	Parent Forum 9.05am- Transition Focus	19th June	1 Hart Class Assembly
		26 th June	1 Sharratt Class Assembly
		3rd July	2 Blake Class Assembly
		10th July	EYs Floella Class Assembly
		17th July	EYs Donaldson Class Assembly