



Herstmonceux

Church of England Primary School



Learning, Loving, Living



Dear Families,

It has been a busy week both in and out of school this week!

I have spent four days with an amazing team of Year 6 pupils and staff on our annual residential trip to PGL Windmill Hill—or, as one parent aptly put it, "Costa Del Windmill Hill!" The children proved once again just how incredible they are by tackling every challenge head-on and doing everything they could to conquer their fears. It was an absolute pleasure to watch how they supported and cheered one another on throughout the trip; seeing such strong teamwork and character really does bode well for the rest of the school year.

Meanwhile, back in school, the high energy continued. I returned to plenty of wonderful stories of exciting learning, hard work, and resilience taking place across all the classrooms.

Miss Emmett
Head of School

Celebration Assembly

All the children work hard to follow our Golden Rules and to use their Learning Powers, and in the last two weeks we especially congratulate ...

Oak Class Reception – Daisy & Eleanor
Maple Class Y1 – George & Grace
Willow Class Y2 – Freddie & Mya
Chestnut Class Y3 – Theo & Scarlett
Spindle Class Y4 – Teddy & Scarlett
Ash Class Y5 – Archie & Adelaide
Sycamore Class Y6 – Bridget & Jack & Ada & Maisie

Attendance Award – Oak Class (99.64%)

Prayer from Celebration Worship

Our Father in Heaven,
Thank you for holding my hand through tough times and helping me own my courage.
Please help me share my courage with the World and beyond.
I hope everyone gets through their hard times successfully.
And knowing what is right or wrong.
Amen

Written and read by Hugh - Sycamore Class Y6

Attendance

Good attendance is key to your child's success, learning, and happiness at school. Arriving on time every day ensures they never miss out on vital lessons, exciting activities, or time with friends.

Congratulations to our winning class this week...



Oak Class with 99.64% attendance

Oak Class - Reception	99.64%
Maple Class - Year 1	98%
Willow Class – Year 2	94.48%
Chestnut Class – Year 3	99.23%
Spindle Class – Year 4	94.33%
Ash Class – Year 5	98.75%
Sycamore Class – Year 6	92.41%

Thank you for your continued support in helping our pupils achieve their very best by prioritising regular attendance!

Calendar dates

Please visit our website to keep up to date with all school events. This is the easiest way to keep an eye on everything school life.

<https://www.herstmonceux.e-sussex.sch.uk/Calendar/>

Year 6 PGL Residential

What a week!

What a fantastic few days we have all had! The children have thrown themselves into all of the activities and supported each other superbly. I cannot praise them highly enough for the attitude and determination they have shown throughout the trip.

Here are a few of the photos to give you a glimpse of the adventures the children got up to!

Zip Wire



Raft Building



Archery



Climbing Wall – all 23metres!



Team Building – can you get the ball from the top to the bottom of the path?



All aboard!



The final night was a glitter ball of a disco with the children strutting their funky moves to all the old classics. We loved seeing them join in with Wigfield's "Saturday Night", YMCA and, the all-time school favourite, "The Macarena"! This was followed by a very calm bedtime; the children were settled and lights out by 10pm! What a winner!

Our final morning saw an early start, with us attempting to see the sunrise (#fantastic50). Unfortunately, the cloud prevented this but the children still watched the Eastbourne lights slowly switch off as the dawn chorus began.



It was a fantastic few days where the children have shown us amazing resilience, determination and camaraderie. They have been a credit to our school and their families.

Thank you to Miss Mortland and Mrs Hibbert for all their hard work, encouragement and their competitive spirit when it comes to Exploding Kittens!

Enjoy the weekend, recharge those batteries and we look forward to seeing you all back at school on Monday!

Oak Class

We have had another wonderful couple of weeks in Oak Class! It has been heart-warming to watch some really great friendships flourishing across the classroom, and we have been so impressed by how kindly the children are looking after one another.

To get ourselves ready for writing, we have focused heavily on language development through lots of shared story times, rich play discussions, and carpet chats. The children have also been busy building up their hand strength by using their fine motor skills in a wide variety of fun ways. Excitingly, we have even started our very first sounds in Phonics (s, a, t, p, l, n, m, d), including practising how to recognize the letters, say the sounds they make, and have a go at writing them too!

In Maths, we have been learning all about subitising up to 3, which means quickly spotting groups of 1, 2, or 3 objects without needing to count them individually, even when they are hidden within larger groups. We have also been working hard on securing our basic counting skills with the help of a very special visitor—our little dragon, 'Wings'! Wings keeps making a few silly mistakes with his counting, and the children have particularly loved stepping up to teach him and help him learn from his errors. It has been a fantastic couple of weeks, and we are so proud of all their hard work!



In P.E., we have been continuing to learn the fundamentals, focusing on how to move safely around space, handle equipment properly, and practice our very best listening skills. The children had absolute magic in their lesson as they took on the task of looking after their own little 'fairies' (mini scarves). They loved moving them carefully around different parts of their bodies, practicing throwing and catching, and using their quick reactions to save their fairies from the sneaky dragon!



Miss Prior & Mrs Climpson

Maple Class

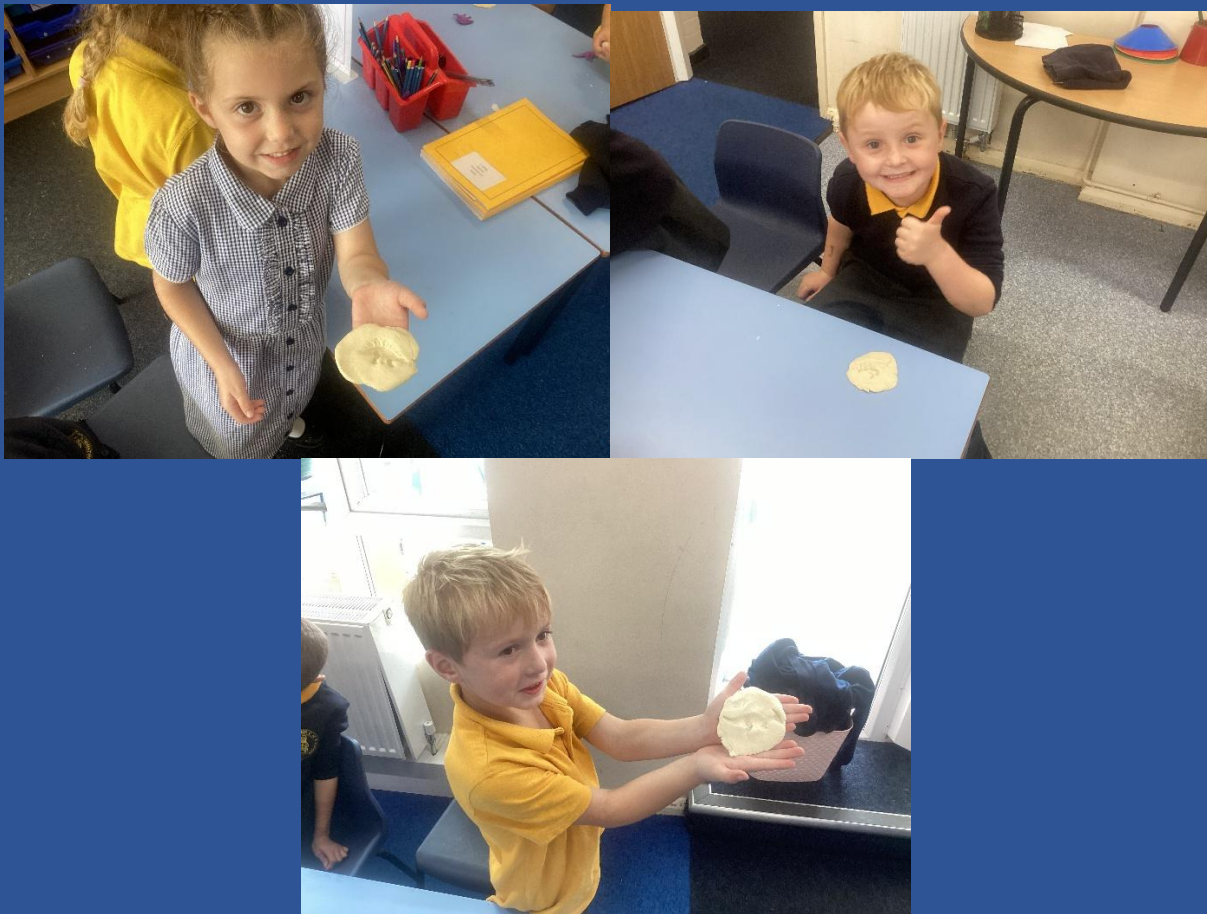
It has been an eventful two weeks in Maple class, and we want to thank the children for being so great with the different teachers they have had. And how strange it was for me to be in for the whole week – my first full week in 5 years. A big thank you to the class for helping it go smoothly.

We have been writing exclamation sentences to congratulate Duck on his egg, using imperative verbs to tell him how to look after what hatched from his egg (which was very unexpected!), and wrote reviews saying what we liked about it. Then we finished this week off my learning facts about different eggs to read aloud and present to an audience.

In maths we have been focusing on counting forwards and adding one more to numbers within 10. We have also counted backwards and saying one number less than numbers within 10. Our statistics work has seen us studying groups of items and saying which group has more, and which group has less in. Finally, we are continuing to learn a rhyme to help us remember all the numbers bonds to ten.

In art we have been experimenting with painting. We have used different size and shaped brushes, different style of brushstroke, and even using different materials like tissue paper.

We have had a great time learning about Mary Anning finding a complete Ichthyosaurus (Ich-thee-uh-saw-us) in Lyme Regis when she was just 11 years old. It was the first complete Ichthyosaurus skeleton that had ever been found. We then made our own dinosaur fossils by pushing our little dinosaurs into a piece of salt dough. They look really cool!



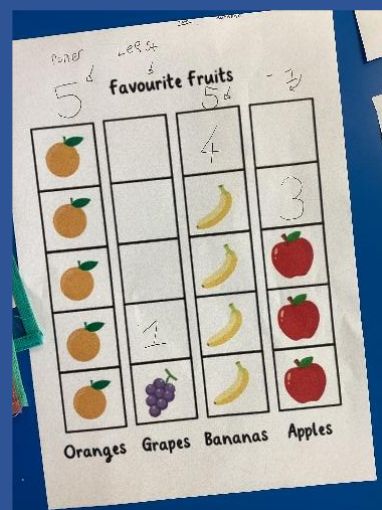
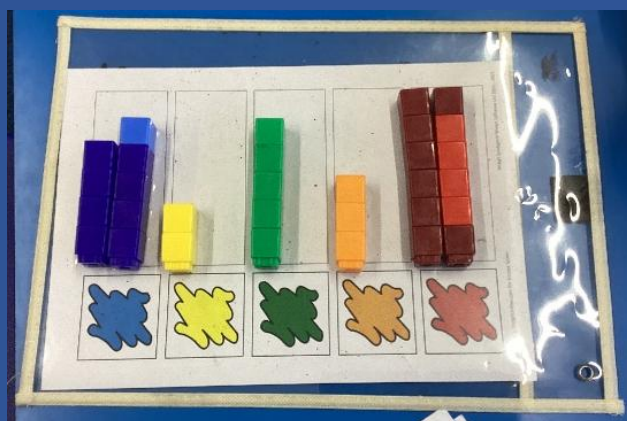
Miss Hunnisett, Mr Toms & Miss Roberts

Willow Class

The term is flying by! Here is a look at what our busy learners have been up to across the curriculum this week.

In maths, we have been exploring statistics! The children have worked hard learning how to read, interpret, and create **block charts** & **pictograms**, **tally charts** & data grouping.

They are picking up these new skills quickly and with fantastic confidence. We have also officially introduced our **2 times tables!**



Our global journey continues as we explore the world's continents in our geography lessons!

The children sculpted their own 3D world maps using playdough to bring the continents to life. We've also started examining key geographical features across each continent, and the children were thrilled to discover the incredible animals that live around the world.



This week in art, the class mastered **leaf rubbings!** The children were eager to practice this tactile technique—placing leaves vein-side up beneath paper and using crayons to reveal delicate textures. They produced truly lovely artwork!

Mrs Wake & Mrs Charrett



Chestnut Class

We have found ourselves at the end of yet another busy week in Year 3! Our English topic is slowly coming to a close which the children have finished by attempting their own fantasy stories. We've had characters disappearing off to magical realms, finding new friends and discovering action packed journeys to get back again.

Our next English topic will be revolving around that of 'Pompeii' by Christina Balit!

In Maths, the children have been continuing to learn about place value including hundreds, tens and ones. We are now onto revising our simple addition and subtraction facts. In our non-number sessions, the children have been looking at statistics and how we can collect and present data. Children have been roaming the class asking their peers for their favourite pets, sweets, cars and football teams! (Arsenal didn't get the most votes though, so obviously that data was flawed!)

In Geography, the children have absolutely loved learning about volcanoes, earthquakes and the make-up of the Earth. We have linked this heavily to our Art sessions where we are looking at Andy Warhol artwork, including his Vesuvius work. We have practised block colours, crosshatching and other shading skills and also designed our own diptychs.

The children have also really enjoyed learning about our skeleton and bones and how they work to protect or support our body. They found it even more interesting when we compared this to animal skeletons to discover that some animals don't have the same bone structures as us!



Spindle Class

It has been another busy and productive couple of weeks in Year 4, and the children have continued to impress us with their hard work, enthusiasm and creativity.

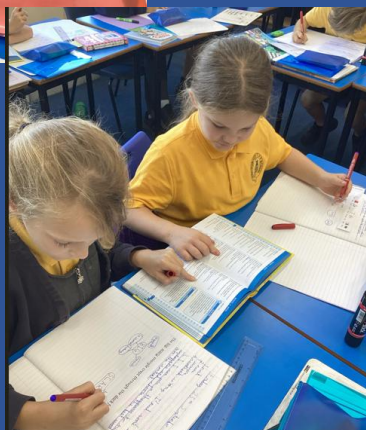
In English, the children have been working incredibly hard to create their own versions of Lewis Carroll's famous poem, Jabberwocky. They have had great fun experimenting with imaginative language, including some wonderfully creative nonsense words! After planning, drafting and editing their poems, the children have now typed up their finished pieces. We are bringing them all together to create our very own Year 4 class poetry book. We are extremely proud of the effort and imagination the children have put into their writing and cannot wait to see the finished collection!

In Maths, the children have continued to demonstrate their fantastic skills when using written methods for addition and subtraction. They have worked carefully and confidently, applying their understanding to a range of calculations and problems. We have now begun to take a deeper look at place value, exploring what each digit represents within a number. The children are developing their understanding of the value of thousands, hundreds, tens and ones and using this knowledge to explore numbers in greater depth.

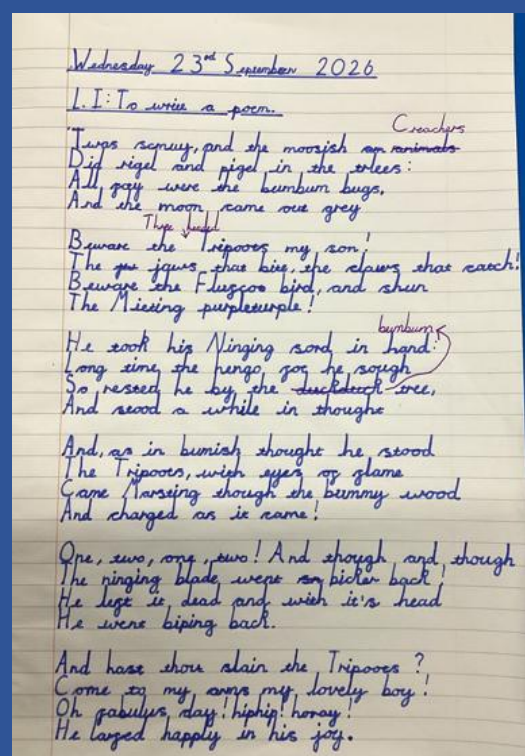
In Geography, the children have begun to develop a better understanding of rivers. We have been learning about the different stages of a river and exploring the features that can be found along its journey from the source to the mouth. The children have enjoyed developing their geographical vocabulary and finding out how rivers change as they travel through the landscape.

The children have also been keeping very active in PE! On Mondays, they have been honing their fitness skills through a variety of activities designed to develop their stamina and coordination. It has been wonderful to see them challenging themselves and showing determination to keep improving. On Fridays, the children have begun an exciting dance unit. They have started to explore different movements and are beginning to put these together to create their own dance sequences. We are looking forward to seeing how their dances develop over the coming weeks!

Well done, Year 4, for another fantastic two weeks of learning. Keep up the brilliant work!



Mrs Peirson, Mrs Piercy
& Miss Smith



Ash Class

We're Ash Class and we're loving life in year 5! These last couple of weeks we've (among other things) completed our first full piece of writing, half of the class have enjoyed forest school, half the class belted out Living on a Prayer and learnt about the tropics, we all created our own Hokusai-style print of The Great Wave, we all created a wholly-original dance in PE, we tested our fitness and running prowess, learnt the seasons in French (and why so much of English comes from French – looking at you, William!), did some maths, looked at ways God is represented in art, ran the school while year 6 were gallivanting off at PGL, and, in PSHE, talked about the importance and benefit that can come from 'stepping into the arena' – pushing ourselves out of our comfort zones.

Phew!

Of course, every day is an adventure and it is impossible to list all the little discoveries and challenges this fantastic class encounter. Out of the above, it has been especially rewarding to mark Ash's first piece of writing. Having practised expanded noun phrases, looked at the importance and impact of word choice, and reminded ourselves of sentence starter variety, the class created some wonderfully descriptive and dramatic passages about Michael and Stella getting washed overboard. Well done, Ash Class.

I have also been impressed with the creativity and joy shown during our dance lessons. We dance when we're happy, and Ash Class clearly have a lot of joy to share. Dance like nobody's watching!! This all bodes very well for the Big Dance later in the year. Not just in dance, but more generally, we have seen a number of examples this year of children accomplishing things they were not sure they could do. This is one of the best things about being a teacher, and it never gets old. With so much of the year still to come, myself and Mrs Pavitt are really excited to see how much Ash Class 2026/27 will achieve before the summer.

Mr Valder & Mrs Pavitt



Online Safety

At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

TIKTOK

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Online videos are often associated with apps such as YouTube, but among teens, TikTok is king. The app provides a potentially addictive, never-ending stream of short clips tailored to users' interests based on their viewing habits. Around half of British children use TikTok, and while most content is benign, Ofcom considers it the app where young people are "most likely to encounter a potential harm".

AGE RESTRICTION
13+
(Certain features are restricted to over-18s only)

AGE-INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT

TikTok's Following Feed shows videos from known creators, while the default For You Feed serves endless clips based on viewing history. Most are harmless, but unsuitable content can still appear, and watching for long enough signals interest to the algorithm. Although TikTok bans illegal or inappropriate uploads, the volume of posts means some slip through, increasing the chance that children encounter age-inappropriate material before it is detected or removed.

BODY IMAGE AND DANGEROUS CHALLENGES

Ofcom reports that most online harms for girls involve body image, while boys more often see dangerous stunts. Both types appear frequently on TikTok and spread quickly through its engagement-driven algorithm. Harmful challenges have included the "blackout" trend, where users held their breath until passing out. Families filed lawsuits after children died linked to the trend, showing how extreme or risky content can rapidly reach young people and negatively influence them.

IN-APP SPENDING

TikTok is free, but children can still spend money. TikTok coins, costing £9.99 to £224.99, let users buy gifts for creators. TikTok Shop adds risk by allowing purchases from influencers or companies, sometimes leading to poor-quality items driven by persuasive marketing. A Canadian investigation found TikTok collected personal data from many children for targeting and advertising despite age limits, meaning young users may lose control over their personal information.

CONTACT WITH STRANGERS

Between 1.6 and 1.9 billion people use TikTok, meaning there's a high risk of unwanted attention from strangers. Accounts created by over-16s (or young people using a fake date of birth) are set to public view by default. This means that not only is someone's profile visible to everyone else on the app, it also suggests their videos to others and allows anyone to download or comment on them.

MISINFORMATION AND RADICALISATION

TikTok's short videos may appear lighthearted, but they can expose young people to harmful ideas. Misinformation is common, and Ofcom reports that nearly one third of 12-15-year-olds use TikTok as a news source, increasing the chance of seeing racist, misogynistic, extremist or conspiracy material. Even brief clips can influence impressionable users and shape their worldview, making discussions about critical thinking, propaganda and online influence especially important for parents and educators.

ADDICTIVE DESIGN

TikTok's fast-paced stream of eye-catching videos can be potentially addictive for young users. In 2024, UK children spent an average of 127 minutes per day on the platform, double the time recorded in 2020. Excessive use can disrupt sleep, increase irritability, and distract from healthier activities. Constantly skipping between short clips may also affect attention span, making it harder to focus on longer tasks such as homework or reading.

Advice for Parents & Educators

ENABLE FAMILY PAIRING

Family Pairing allows parents to link their TikTok account to their child's in order to manage settings remotely. Parents can then turn on Restricted Mode (reducing the chances of a child seeing inappropriate content), set screen time limits, make accounts private and manage whether their child can send messages – and if they can, to whom. Children cannot alter these settings without parental approval.

BLOCK IN-APP SPENDING

Parents can restrict in-app purchases on iPhone and Android devices to prevent accidental or impulsive TikTok spending. Young people can easily spend large amounts on TikTok coins or low-quality products promoted through TikTok Shop. If a disappointing purchase occurs, turn it into a discussion about influencer marketing and how online promotions can be misleading.

DISCUSS THE DANGERS

If a child wants to use TikTok and you're happy for them to do so, it's good practice to discuss the potential risks. Ensure they don't share any identifying personal information or respond to dangerous trends, and that they know to talk to a trusted adult if they're worried by interactions on the app. With more teens using TikTok for news, it's important to talk about misinformation and propaganda.

READ THE SIGNS

If you're concerned that a child is spending too much time on TikTok, or that they've been emotionally affected by something they've seen, it's important to know how to spot the signs. Increased irritability and a lack of concentration are potential red flags, as is failing to complete homework or skipping meals. Remember, the parental controls are there for a reason, and it's never too late to introduce limits.

Meet Our Expert

Alan Martin is an experienced technology journalist who has written for the likes of Wired, TechRadar, Tom's Guide, The Evening Standard and The New Statesman.



See full reference list on our website

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Safeguarding at Herstmonceux CE Primary School

Our school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and expects staff, including volunteers and visitors, to share this commitment.

No worry is too small.
If you see or hear something that concerns you, speak to one of our safeguarding team.
We are always here to listen and help.

If you have safeguarding concerns or would like to discuss any issues that arise, please contact us in person, via the school office or by using the email address safeguarding@herstmonceux.e-sussex.sch.uk.

		
Helen Emmett Head of School Safeguarding Lead	Catherine Cottingham Executive Headteacher Deputy Safeguarding Lead	Kally Livingston SENCO Deputy Safeguarding lead

You can also get advice if you have a concern about a child from the following helplines:

East Sussex Single point of Advice :01323 464222

NSPCC Safeguarding advice line: 0808 800 5000

*Chair of Governors: Liz Ford
Safeguarding Governors Nina Jabang and Emma Robinson*

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/>

ChildLine: <https://www.childline.org.uk/>