



Headteacher's Newsletter

Friday 13th February 2026

Dates for the diary

Monday 2 nd March 2026	Year 3 Ancient Greeks workshop
Thursday 5 th March 2026	World Book Day – dressing up day
Friday 6 th March 2026	5AR Class Assembly
Friday 13 th March 2026	3EB Class Assembly
Monday 16 th March 2026	Year 1 trip to Tower of London
Wednesday 11 th March 2026	Parent Consultation Meeting bookings open
Friday 20 th March 2026	3AG Class Assembly
Friday 20 th March 2026	Holi Festival
Wednesday 25 th March 2026	Parent Consultation Meetings
Thursday 26 th March 2026	Parent Consultation Meetings
Friday 27 th March 2026	3JN Class Assembly
Friday 27 th March 2026	End of spring term – normal school day finish
Thursday 16 th April 2026	Year 5 trip to Bank of England - Class 1
Wednesday 22 nd April 2026	Year 5 trip to Bank of England - Class 2
Wednesday 29 th April 2026	Year 5 trip to Bank of England - Class 3

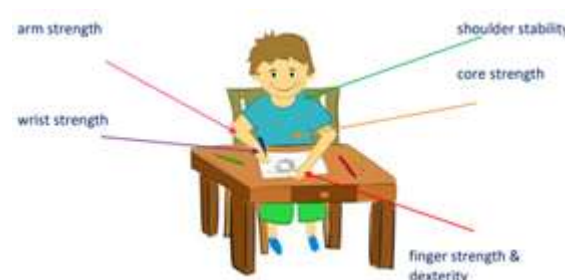
Babies

We are delighted to share the wonderful news that Rebecca Spring (Owl class teacher) recently welcomed her first child; baby Emmie arrived later than expected last month. We are also delighted to share the wonderful news that Clarence Ng (Otter class teacher) recently welcomed his second child; baby Romy arrived earlier than expected last week. We wish them and their families every happiness at this exciting time.

Handwriting – getting ready to hold a pencil

Kirsty Spittle (Reception Year Group Leader) writes:

Larger (gross) motor skills develop before smaller (fine) motor skills. Muscles that are closer to the centre of the body develop before the muscles that are further away from the core. Therefore, children start developing postural control, shoulder stability, arm strength, wrist stability, hand strength before finger strength and manipulation. The children in our early years do lots of daily activities to promote gross and fine motor skills.



How can you help support your child so they are ready to hold a pencil?

- Build their postural strength through tummy time so they can sit up at a desk.
- Play push/pull games or hang from monkey bars to develop shoulder and upper-arm strength, stability so they can hold their arm steady whilst they use it to write.
- Strengthen their wrists through painting on an easel or using a rolling pin so they can stabilise their wrists whilst writing.
- Use spray bottles or hole punches to develop hand grip strength so they have the strength to maintain the arch of the palm whilst writing.
- Use finger puppets or sing finger songs (e.g. one little finger or the itsy bitsy spider) to encourage independent finger movement so that their fingers can move dynamically and independently in a tripod grasp.

- Encourage use of pincer grip by threading small beads, using pegs or pinching play-dough. Continue doing these activities whilst a child is developing their pencil grip.

Young children will not be strong enough to hold small pencils, or will they have the control to stabilise their shoulders/wrists. Therefore, they tend to use chunkier writing tools and write using whole arm movements. As their strength and control develops, their movement of writing will move from the whole arm, to the wrist, and finally to the fingertips.

Haringey Public Health

Haringey schools have been asked to share a letter from Haringey Public Health following a significant increase in measles cases in Enfield in recent weeks which is now spreading into Haringey. Please find the link to the letter below:

<https://rhodesavenue.school/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/Haringey-Measles-Letter-for-Parents-and-Carers.pdf>

Haringey SEN newsletter

Please find below the link to Haringey's SEND Newsletter (January 2026 edition):

[SEND Newsletter: Last chance to share your views, ADHD and online safety workshops and more](#)

Learning across the school

Children have been very busy and focussed with their learning this half term. Here is a snapshot of some of the learning across the school.

Sally Eustance (Nursery Year Group Leader) writes:

Recently in our Outdoor Learning session Nursery children took part in the RSPB Big Schools Birdwatch 2026. Previously the children had made birdfeeders in the classroom and excitedly took them out to hang on the trees in our Spinney area.

We were very proud to receive our certificate from the RSPB too. Once a week, Woodpeckers and Hedgehogs go to the hall to do 'Wiggle me into squiggle movements' to then move onto 'Squiggle whilst you wiggle'. Wiggle me into Squiggle is a pre-writing programme that takes the stages of child development and wraps it into specific sessions of movement that will assist a child's development and strengthen muscles we need to control for writing to occur. The children follow specific movements using scarves or flappers along to music. After these movements the children will then do specific moves to create marks that in turn will create letters, using movement to accelerate gross motor and fine muscle. It is lots of fun and links early writing to child development strengthening the child's muscles and brain connections.

Kirsty Spittle (Reception Year Group Leader) writes:

The children in Reception are really engaging in their weekly 'Drawing Club' sessions. 'Drawing Club' is an exciting way to open up the magic world of tales and stories whilst enriching the children's language, developing their fine motor skills and giving them lots of time to talk to each other in small groups. Drawing Club is used to develop the children's creativity, imagination and inspire them to draw and write. In each session the children write a code word or sentence. Their writing then brings 'magic' to their drawings. Their codes are used to make things happen in their drawings, such as characters growing, changing size, or transforming. Our aim is to get all children to ENJOY the experience of writing by the end of Reception.



Sophie Papworth (Year 1 Year Group Leader) writes:

Year 1 have really been enjoying our History topic - The Old Toy Shop. We have learnt all about chronology and have made timelines, we have looked at similarities as well as differences between toys from the past and modern toys. Alongside this our Science topic (Materials) has enabled us to examine the materials used for toys from the past and more modern ones. We have learnt all about the properties of materials and their suitability for various everyday objects. Did you know that each half term we focus on a key text for our English lessons? These books are chosen to spark the children's interest and inspire their writing. We cover a range of genres and text types, we first focus on sentence structure and handwriting and build up to longer pieces of writing in Summer term. Maths is all about number sense and fluency, setting the foundations so that the children are secure in their knowledge as they move into Year 2.



Aileen Cronin (Year 2 Year Group Leader) writes:



Year 2 have been working incredibly hard during their Great Fire of London topic. They have been learning about housing in 17th-century London, using historical sources to explore the materials homes were built from and comparing these with those used in modern-day houses. The children then considered why the Great Fire of London spread so rapidly and how the building materials of the time contributed to this. This learning culminated in a very exciting afternoon, during which the children designed and made their own 17th-century houses.

Joseph Noutch (Year 3 Year Group Leader) writes:

As part of our Groovy Greeks topic, Year 3 have been exploring life in Ancient Greece across the curriculum. In Design and Technology, the children researched Greek pottery before designing and making their own clay pots using pinching, rolling and joining techniques. In English, we have continued our work on Theseus and the Minotaur, developing narrative writing skills. Our History learning has focused on Greek gods and goddesses, while in Science we have been identifying and comparing the properties of different rocks, linking to materials used in the ancient world.



Elaine Gambin (Year 4 Year Group Leader) writes:

This half term, Year 4 has led assemblies on a range of meaningful topics. Oak Class shared a special message about spreading kindness and the positive impact small acts can have on others. Mulberry Class presented their learning on Africa, highlighting the richness of its cultures and reinforcing the importance of diversity and community. Rowan Class taught us all about Lunar New Year by retelling the story of the Zodiac calendar and explaining how it is celebrated by East and South East Asian cultures. As part of our RE learning, Year 4 ended this half term with a visit to our local synagogue.

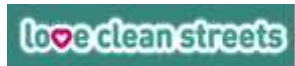


Catriona Donnellan (Year 6 Year Group Leader) writes:

Year 6 settled in well to the new year and have been enjoying our new topic 'U.S.A'. They are enjoying learning about this continent and are working hard to increase their score for how many of the US states they can name! 6MD have embarked on some sewing and Natasha has been so impressed with their needle skills and perseverance when it comes to threading a needle! It has also been lovely to see so many of our Year 6 children getting involved in the Bilio-Buzz challenge and chatting so enthusiastically about the books they are reading.



Love Clean Streets



The school frequently receives communications about issues on the surrounding roads to the school where we do not have a remit to take action. Parents can report issues, e.g. graffiti, fly-tipping, dog mess, using the Love Clean Streets app. Love Clean Streets then communicates reports to the relevant local authority, e.g. Haringey.

Maths Challenge

Demi Jeffels (Lead Practitioner for Maths) writes:

We are absolutely delighted to share the success of our Year 5 mathematicians who were invited to take part in the prestigious Christ's Hospital London Maths Challenge at the stunning Guildhall. On the day, they took on extremely tough puzzles and problems alongside 60 teams (120 children) from schools across London. Both our teams did brilliantly, and Isaac and Mario were genuinely shocked and over the moon to hear their names called as 2nd place winners, proudly collecting their prize. We are so proud of all the children who entered both The Primary Maths Challenge and this challenge— their enthusiasm and resilience have been truly inspiring!

I've been blown away by the buzz for maths this half term. On top of this, seven of our Year 5 and 6 children (Oliver, Tonny, Isaac, Woodrow, Ethan, Joseph and Lyra) were invited to take part in the Primary Maths Challenge Bonus Round - an invite only follow up challenge for high scorers who extend and deepen their problem solving skills in February each year. This is more invitations than we had last year, even though the qualifying score was raised, making it a fantastic achievement and something we are incredibly proud of!

National Year of Reading

Natasha Morgan (English Subject Leader) writes:

The National Year of Reading 2026 is a UK-wide campaign designed to help more people rediscover the joy of reading. In school, we think it is really important for children to see a wide range of different types of books as this helps them develop a sense of what they enjoy reading. We also think carefully about which books will engage our pupils, feel relatable to them or broaden their experiences. These are some of the books our pupils are reading in class this half-term.



Year 1 read a picture book set in London. Year 2 reading an illustrated historical account of London in the past. Year 3 read a biography about the Nobel Prize-winning chemist Mario Molina. Year 4 have read a fictional travel adventure that blends non-fiction, biography and travelogue as well as a collection of traditional African tales. Year 5 have read a graphic retelling of Egyptian myths and a historical fiction novel. Year 6 have read a collection of horror inspired traditional tales and a sports fiction verse novel.

NHS Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy activities

Please find the link to Haringey's HUTS newsletter. Here you will find all of the Occupational Therapy and Speech and Language Therapy activities planned for the Spring Term. Any family can access these activities. You do not need a referral to access these services. You can access advice lines, drop ins and resources.

[Spring Term NHS OT and SLT activities in Haringey](#)

Sharing practice with other schools



In 2018 our Specialist Art Teacher (Rosie Sawyer) set up PATN (Primary Art Teachers Network) which is a network group for primary school art teachers and subject leaders. Last week Rosie organised a workshop at, and in partnership with, St Marys CE Primary School in order to share her specialist knowledge of printmaking skills.

Parent consultation meetings

The autumn term meetings will be taking place on Wednesday 25th March and Thursday 26th March. These meetings will be face-to-face, in your child's classroom and are 10 minutes per appointment. Parents have been given advance notice of these dates and there are no other dates/times where teachers will be leading Parent Consultation meetings.

A Parent Consultation Meeting can only be attended by a person with parental responsibility. One or both (if applicable) can attend these meetings. If only one person with parental responsibility is able to attend, it is their responsibility to communicate to the other person with parental responsibility all communication from the meeting itself.

The school understands that there are situations where some persons with parental responsibility do not live together. Where this is the case it is their joint responsibility to ensure that they either both attend the meeting or agree for one to attend and feedback all communication to the other. This is the responsibility of parents to agree and organise and not the school.

If there are any cases where a Court Order is in place between adults with joint parental responsibility, we request that they contact the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (Deputy Headteacher - Cigdem Mourat).

Bookings go live on Wednesday 11th March.

Parent seminar

Isabel Squirrel (UKCP Child Psychotherapist) will be returning to Rhodes Avenue on Thursday 19th February 2026 (11am start) to lead a parent seminar on anxiety. As parents you are the first to notice when your child is feeling anxious and it is often hard to know what to do and when to act. Isabel has particular experience in working with children with anxiety. In this seminar she will explore with parents:

- What is normal anxiety
- When to seek professional help
- How to support your child with anxiety effectively
- Top tips to strengthen child mental health
- Time to go deeper together with Q&A

There is a charge of £10 per adult attending. Please email the school office if you would like to attend and the charge will be added to your payment account. Unfortunately, you will still be charged should you not attend the session.

Parent Space

Karen Lever (our School Counselling Service Lead) writes:

I am a UKCP accredited Child Psychotherapist and a Family Counsellor and head up Rhodes Avenue's school counselling service. I offer Parent Space sessions on Tuesday mornings, with two individual appointments available each week for parents and carers to book. Parent Space is a confidential nurturing space where parents can safely explore family life and its challenges. Sessions offer a supportive opportunity to talk things through, make sense of worries and reflect on what might help. I can offer practical strategies and signposting where additional support may be useful. Sessions last 45-50 minutes, cost £20 which will be added to your school payment account (money supports the school counselling service as a whole) and can be booked directly with me via email (karen.lever@rhodesavenue.org.uk).

SENDIASS

Haringey Special Educational Needs Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) is a free, confidential service for parents and carers. The service is commissioned by Haringey Council and provided by Markfield, an independent charity. They provide parents of children and young people aged 0 to 25 with accurate, impartial

information about SEND systems and processes, alongside offering specific services for those newly diagnosed or on the autism assessment waiting list. The link to their website is: [SENDIASS - Markfield](#)

Static and dynamic tripod grips

Kirsty Spittle (Reception Year Group Leader) writes:

Children typically start to develop a static tripod grip between ages 3 and 4 years old. During this stage, the thumb, index and middle finger hold the writing utensil in a stable and fixed position. The movement originates from the wrist or elbow rather than then the fingers.



A dynamic tripod grip typically starts between 5 and 6 years old. It helps children to write efficiently, effortlessly and for a greater endurance. Writing will eventually become an automatic task, so that children can spend more time concentrating on what they want to write, rather than how to go about writing it. Developing the correct skills required for using a pencil efficiently will also help to develop other fine motor skills, including typing skills.

How can I help my child to pick up a pencil?

Occupational therapists recommend that the 'flip it over' method works for 70 of children. Pick up the pencil by the tip, making sure the pencil is pointing towards them. Then gently flip it over so it rests between their thumb and pointer finger.



How it works: i) "Snap, snap, snap": use your thumb and index finger to "snap" or pinch the pencil near its tip. ii) "Flip": turn the pencil so the end points towards you. iii) "Grip": rest the pencil on your middle finger and tuck your ring and little fingers into your palm. iv) "Rest": the pencil should sit in the "web space" between your thumb and index finger, angled slightly back. An example video for you to watch so that you can support your child at home: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPg9qpq6Hhg>

If your child still finds it challenging it might be beneficial for them to use a triangular shaped pencil or pencil grip.



School Development Plan

We continue to work on the objectives and make progress within our School Development Plan. Here is a short update of some of the progress made this half term.

Priority 1: Rising Numbers

Priority Target: To further strengthen the teaching and learning of Mathematics by developing number pedagogy, deepening fluency and understanding, and fostering a culture where Maths is meaningful, engaging, and enjoyable for all members of the school community.

- Demi Jeffels (Lead Practitioner for Maths) and Amy Gowan (Year 3 Class teacher) have joined NCETM's Teaching for Mastery Work Group. This has involved revisiting the key principles of Teaching for Mastery, looking at lesson design, exploring adaptive teaching and participating in collaborative planning.
- Lead Teachers for Mastering Number at Reception/KS1 (Myrtle Caldeira, Sophie Papworth + Aileen Cronin) have attended national Lead Teacher workshops.
- Demi Jeffels (Lead Practitioner for Maths) and Cigdem Mourat (Deputy Headteacher) attended the London Central and North West Maths Hub Primary Conference.

- We have accessed Enhanced Targeted Support from Maths Hub. This will focus on undertaking book looks, ascertaining pupil voice, exploring current research and considering how NCETM/EEF guidance can align with our school context and looking at the NCETM curriculum spines and identifying where they may support our curriculum intent and sequencing.
- Following our recent Primary Maths Challenge competition our highest scoring Year 5 pupils visited The Guildhall, City of London on 6.2.2026 to join other Year 5 children from primary schools across London to take part in mathematical problem-solving tasks and challenges.
- Demi Jeffels (Lead Practitioner for Maths) has led training for teachers.
- Demi Jeffels (Lead Practitioner for Maths) and Elaine Gambin (Year 4 Year Group Leader) have commenced WonderMaths lunchtime clubs targeting spotlight children from the School Development Plan.

Priority 2: Safe, Seen, Supported

Priority Target: To strengthen the school's approach to wellbeing, behaviour, and relationships by enhancing staff knowledge, embedding supportive systems, promoting equity and attendance, and deepening partnerships with families and the wider community.

- Haringey Educational Psychology Service led a session for parents on Anxiety.
- Support Staff have completed the first module of Hemisphere Education's training which is designed to improve racial literacy and combat unconscious bias in school. Each year there is a focus on different ethnic groups (Black, South Asian and Chinese heritage). Teachers will be completing this training after half term.
- Aileen Cronin (Interim Ourselves and Others Lead) has attended training on the new RSHE curriculum, reviewed the school's current Ourselves and Others curriculum in line with new expectations and drafted Pupil Voice questionnaires in order to gather pupil voice.

Priority 3: Learning Beyond the Walls

Priority Target: To use the outdoors to help children learn, feel calm, work together, and enjoy nature through Forest School, Outdoor Learning, and fun experiences beyond the classroom.

- Meghan Grove was appointed as Outdoor Learning Lead for the 2025/2026 academic year. Connections to Outdoor Learning within our current Knowledge and Skills Maps have been made. Teachers explicitly identify links to Outdoor Learning within Medium Term Planning.
- Catriona Donnellan (Science Leader) has led assemblies in school following on from the NWLA's In The Know assemblies last term.
- Active Leaders have begun work within the infant playground after having completed their training at the end of last term and under the guidance of Chelsea Orridge-Golding (Sports Coach).
- We have arranged for half a day's training for all Years 4-6 class teachers on Outdoor Learning. These sessions are led by Ivana Grant (Outdoor Learning teacher) and take place together with the teacher's class in the school Spinney. Year 5 teachers have now completed their training.

WonderMaths Club

Demi Jeffels (Lead Practitioner for Maths) writes:

As part of our School Development Plan, we continue to enhance the teaching and learning of Mathematics across the school. Our focus is on building strong number fluency, deepening conceptual understanding, and fostering a culture where Maths is stimulating, relevant, and enjoyable for all pupils.

WonderMaths Club is primarily aimed at Year 5 pupils, offering an exciting enrichment opportunity to explore problem-solving, teamwork, and creative mathematical thinking. In line with our School Development Plan, we have also invited a select group of Year 4 pupils who we believe will particularly benefit from this extra challenge and support. The initial allocation of spaces was carefully chosen to support our key priorities:

- closing the attainment gap for pupils who are 'Just At' expected standards in Maths
- increasing KS2 Greater Depth attainment, particularly among Black Caribbean and Mixed White/Black Caribbean pupils
- nurturing a love of Maths and inspiring confidence and enjoyment across our school community

After the first round of places was allocated, many Year 5 pupils who were keen to join WonderMaths were given the opportunity to sign up for a trial session. Their enthusiasm was infectious, and the session buzzed with energy as children tackled a range of engaging and challenging puzzles. All places are now fully booked. WonderMaths Club takes place every Wednesday at lunchtime for 25 minutes and is led by myself alongside Elaine Gambin, Year 4 Year Group Leader. Each session is hands-on, collaborative, and thought-provoking, encouraging children to think creatively, reason mathematically, and build confidence.

Run by MathsZone, WonderMaths is a nationally recognised enrichment programme. Schools participating may progress to regional heats, with the highest-performing teams advancing to a grand final celebration event. For our pupils, this represents a unique opportunity to showcase their skills, represent the school, and enjoy a memorable, confidence-boosting experience in mathematics.

I even made the teachers have a go at the WonderMaths activities during a staff meeting! It was a fantastic experience, tackling the puzzles and games alongside colleagues and seeing first-hand how engaging, fun, and thought-provoking the challenges can be. They got very competitive indeed!

World Book Day

Sophie Papworth (Reading for Pleasure Lead) writes:

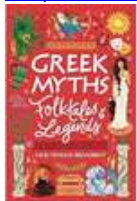
On Thursday 5th March 2026 we will be celebrating World Book Day. On the day children are invited to come dressed as their favourite book character. During the day there will be lots of book based fun in classes as well as our author visits.

There will be three author visits to Rhodes Avenue to help us celebrate World Book Day. These visits help inspire children's love of reading for pleasure and are an enjoyable way for us to celebrate all things books during this National Year of Reading.

These visits have been organised together with Pickled Pepper Bookshop in Crouch End and you can purchase books via the links below. On the day the author will sign your child's book. You must make sure that in the comments section you include your child's full name and their class name to make sure the books get to the right children. Please purchase via the links and not on any other site. The authors do not charge for their visits on the understanding that books will be purchased via the bookshop.

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 - A celebration of the imagination, Kid Rex brings adventure and magic to the mundane, making everyday tasks exciting and fun. Mayo is an award winning poet and author for children.

<https://www.pickledpepperbooks.co.uk/products/mayo-agard-olubo-kid-rex-to-the-rescue-rhodes-avenue-thurs-5-march>



Year 3 and Year 4 - A beautiful new edition of 20 Greek myths, retold for a younger audience. From raging gods and goddesses to tales of brave and foolish mortals, this collection has something for everyone. <https://www.pickledpepperbooks.co.uk/products/vicki-psarias-broadbent-greek-myths-folktales-and-legends-rhodes-avenue-thurs-5-march>

Year 5 and Year 6 - a book by a bestselling local author set in Alexandra Palace and park.

<https://www.pickledpepperbooks.co.uk/collections/karen-mccombie-rhodes-avenue-monday-2-march>



Years 5 and 6 Book Club

Sophie Papworth (Reading for Pleasure Lead) writes:



I am setting up a book club open to all Year 5 and 6 children. We will meet once a half term, maybe twice if the half term is a long one and the discussion will take place during a lunchtime. I am going to start by choosing books from the Biblio-Buzz shortlist and the first one for discussion will be 'The Chronicles of Whetherwhy - The Age of Enchantment' by Anna James. I will have a list of discussion questions that children can come and collect from me a week before we meet. Our first book club will be on Wednesday 18th March 2026 in my classroom - Squirrel class. The aim of the club is to foster a love of reading and hopefully along the way we will navigate dealing with opposing opinions and spark some interesting discussions.

Best wishes,
Maria

Maria Panayiotou-Argyrou
Headteacher

