



Hempsted Church of England Primary School

February 2024 Newsletter



Dear Parents/Carers, Governors and Friends of the School,

Welcome to the latest newsletter. There's plenty to tell you about, things that have happened and things that are planned. In fact, February and March are looking very busy with lots of great things to look forward to.

Changes in Staffing

As you may already know, Mrs Lucie Hill is leaving us at half-term. Mrs Hill has been a teacher at Hempsted for nearly 10 years and is well-known to the children as a great singer!! Over the years, she has arranged several iSing Pop concerts at the church, led the teaching of RE across the school and has been part of a governor's working party helping to ensure that the school fulfils its role as a Church of England school. We will very much miss her, and wish her the very best of luck in her new role as a senior children's pastor.

Moving forward, we believe that we have been very fortunate to recruit another great teacher to join the team at Hempsted. Mrs Laura Walters will be joining us from Dursley Church of England Primary Academy. The Senior Leadership Team, members of the Governing Body and the School Council interviewed for the role just before Christmas, and we are delighted that we can now announce Mrs Walters' appointment.

Attendance

The school attendance rate is currently 94.6% which is an improvement of 1.3% on this time last year and in-line with what we expect. We have had a LOT of illness in the past week or so affecting pupils and staff. Many are saying that they've never felt so ill, or have never seen their children so poorly. The main symptom has been a very high temperature, so high that it has been leading to nausea and sickness. People have also been saying that their whole body has been hurting. Please, if your child has a high temperature then please keep them off until their temperature has returned to normal for 24 hours. Do not dose them up with calpol and send them in!

Recently, we sent home your child's attendance data for the last term. If your child's attendance is less than 90%, the Department for Education classifies them as 'persistent absentees'. If this has been genuine illness there is very little that you can do about it, but it does reemphasise that if you take term-time holidays and then there is illness, you can very quickly find your child in the 'persistent absentee' category.

Residential Trips

We plan residential trips for children in Year 4 and Year 6. These are always fantastic experiences for the children, and for some of them, it is their first time away from home without their parents. In March, the Year 4 children go to The Wilderness Centre in the Forest of Dean for 3 days and 2 nights. In June, the Year 6 children go to PGL Osmington Bay in Weymouth for 4 days and 3 nights.

We always try to keep the costs of any trips down, but naturally residential trips cost more as we need to pay for accommodation, instructors, catering and transport. The accompanying staff are not paid extra despite being on constant supervision day and night!!

If you have a child in **Year 3** or **Year 5**, it might be worth you making a note of these trips and planning ahead. Currently, the Year 4 trip is costing £200 per child and the Year 6 trip is costing £350 per child.

Parent/Teacher Consultations

These are on Monday 5th and Wednesday 7th February. Thank you for booking appointments so promptly. If you need to change anything, please contact the school office.

Online Safety

I would like to include the same article that I shared last year as I believe it is of value to you:

“Online sites such as YouTube use algorithms (computer programming) to recommend videos to watch based on a user’s viewing habits. These algorithms are an emerging safeguarding issue for our children. Research has shown that these algorithms can push children towards increasingly extreme content including groups linked with radicalisation, extremism and misogyny. In particular, the risk of younger children seeing inappropriate content is increased when they share an account with an older sibling.

If you, or your child, are thinking of buying or downloading a new game, watching a new YouTube channel, a TV show (especially on Netflix) or even buying a book(!), I would also like to point out this fantastic resource. It is called www.commonsemmedia.org/ It is an amazing site, with full reviews on so many things such as:

A Lot or a Little?
The parents' guide to what's in this game.

🚫 Stands out for diverse representations and positive messages.

Positive Messages 🗨️ ●●●●● >	Positive Role Models 👤 ●●●●● >	Diverse Representations 👥 ●●●●● >
Ease of Play 🎮 ●●●●● >	Violence & Scariness 💣 ●●●●● >	Sex, Romance & Nudity 👄 Not present
Language #! ●●●●● >	Products & Purchases 💰 ●●●●● >	Drinking, Drugs & Smoking 🍷 Not present

What Parents Need to Know

Parents need to know that Sky: Children of the Light is a downloadable third person adventure game available on the PlayStation 4, PlayStation 5, and the Nintendo Switch. You control a blank-faced avatar, one of the Children of Light, and travel from realm to realm helping to save the spirits of a fallen kingdom. The game features light platforming gameplay and encourages helping other players who occupy a shared world as you progress. Despite having very little direct instruction or dialogue, the

[Show more](#) v

I recommend that you take a look at this site!!”

My School Fund

The easiest way that you can help raise much needed cash for the school is to register yourself with My School Fund. Every time you spend money on your debit/credit card in Sainsburys or Argos, you receive a 2% cashback in the form of an e-voucher that can be redeemed in these stores. The school also receives 1% cashback as well.



So far, 55 parents and staff have registered on this scheme and they have contributed to a total of £600 coming back to the school, and received £1200 in total themselves!! So please, with Sainsburys so close by, let's really make the most of this opportunity. Register yourself at www.myschoolfund.org and make sure you choose us as your school!!! It's a win-win!!!

Well done to Violet and Carter!

Violet and Carter ran 25 miles in December for the charity MND. This charity supports people with motor neurone disease and also looks for ways to stop this terrible condition. They raised an AMAZING £600!!!! They have ran at different times, together with their Dad to complete the challenge. I'm also told that the weather never stopped them and they ran in all sorts of conditions!!



Prayer Day

On Friday 9th February, we are holding a 'Prayer Day'. Mrs Hill, supported by Mrs Laughton and Mrs Middleton, has been busily preparing for this. On the day, there will be a number of activities in the hall, and these will be led by the above people plus lots of volunteers from our lovely parish. Each class will spend time exploring the activities in the hall, and some of our younger children will be supported by the older children which is always nice to see. At the end of the day, you are invited to come into the school hall to see what everyone has been getting up to!

STEM Week

In the week commencing 26th February, we are holding a 'STEM' themed week. STEM is an acronym for 'Science, technology, engineering, mathematics'. Mrs Bickerton has been guiding the staff through the planning of various activities linked to this, and one of the highlights of the week will be a 'vertical day' when all of the classes are mixed up with children from Reception to Year 6 in each group. These were an annual feature before Covid, and it's great to get them planned in again. We will share some of the children's learning in the March newsletter.

Life Education

Anita Collins from Coram Education will be visiting us during February. Each class will have an age-appropriate session in the Life Education tent. This year, Anita will be setting up the tent in the Lyson's Hall so that it doesn't have an impact on the school hall and the lunch sittings. Thank you to the Lyson's Hall for allowing us to do this!

Reading Festival

On the week of 4th March, the Gloucester Schools' Partnership is holding a reading festival. A number of authors will be visiting the city's primary schools, including ours. At the moment, we will be meeting Catherine Barr and Charlotte Middleton.

Swimming Lessons

Once again, we will be hosting the swimming pool on the playground. Please make sure that you have seen the letter about this, and look out for further details. We'd be grateful if parents could make the financial contributions for this as soon as possible.

AUSTRALIA DAY

G'day folks! Class 4 celebrated Australia Day. Children learnt interesting facts about Australia; mapped out the states and capitals; baked and 'taste tested' some Aussie tucker (Pumpkin scones, Vegemite sandwiches and 'Fairy bread'); named Australian animals; shared Australian storybooks; and adored cuddling Australian animal puppets and wearing Australian hats. Class 4 enjoyed creating their own Aboriginal art too.

We had a 'BONZER' day!



Do you have any children's binoculars you don't need anymore?

The nurture group are on the 'look out' for some children's binoculars. If you have any that you could donate, please send them in to school. Many thanks!!

And finally...

Some more good news. You may or may not know that for the past 4 years I've been battling to improve the internet connection at the school. The school was lucky if it managed to get a download speed of 4mbps, which is barely enough to browse the internet on your phone. Failed promises from fibre providers meant that we were let down time and time again, which proved very trying during the Covid lockdowns. We now have a full fibre connection into the school and this means that we can now update our wi-fi network and tablets – which ultimately means less time watching 'buffering' messages and more time using some cool technologies that enhance the learning experience. Hurrah!!

Stay warm,



Mr R Waller
Head Teacher



NB
Nancy Bhandal
THE BROW QUEEN
Permanent Makeup & Beauty

Permanent Hair Stroke Brows
Ombre Brows
PMU Eye Liner
PMU Lip Blush
HD Brows, HD Sculpt Brows
LVL Lash Lift & Tint
Face Threading Treatments
HD Express Brows

Get in touch **07828 185434**
info@nancythebrowqueen.com

K-B PRO HD BROWS LASER

Important Dates for Your Diary

FEBRUARY			
Monday	5 th		Parent/teacher consultations
Wednesday	7 th		Parent/teacher consultations
Thursday	8 th	pm	Year 6 online safety talk delivered by police
Friday	9 th		Whole school 'Prayer Day' End of Term 3
Monday	19 th		Start of Term 4
Wednesday	21 st		Life Education (Years 1, 4 and 6)
Thursday	22 nd		Young Voices Choir to Resorts World Arena, Birmingham
Monday – Friday	26 th to 1 st March		STEM theme week (details to follow)
Wednesday	28 th		Life Education (Years 2, 3, 5 and Reception)
MARCH			
Monday – Friday	4 th to 8 th		Reading Festival, with author visits
Friday	8 th		Year 1 trip to Crocodiles of the World Year 5 STEM K'Nex challenge (in school)
Monday – Friday	11 th to 15 th		Swimming Lessons (Key Stage 2)
Monday – Friday	18 th to 22 nd		Swimming Lessons (Reception & Key Stage 1)
Monday	18 th	10am	Year 4 depart for Wilderness residential Year 5 Bikeability course begins
Wednesday	20 th	pm	Year 4 return from residential
Thursday	21 st	am	Year 6 'Mock Trials' at Skillzone (details to follow)
Friday	22 nd	9.30am 2pm	Easter Service at St Swithun's Church End of Term 4

School lunches and Breakfast/After-School Club bookings are now available to book up until 22nd March