



ORCHARD PRIMARY SCHOOL

NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 2025

Dear Parents,

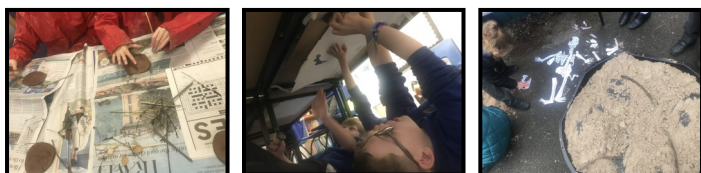
Pupils have made a super start to the new term at Orchard, returning to school happy, engaged and very well-motivated. Their behaviour and attitudes have been excellent and I have seen some fantastic learning during my classroom visits. Together, we are really looking forward to a positive and productive Spring Term. We have of course been visited by OFSTED - full details of the inspection will be circulated shortly. However, the pupils shone; the staff excelled. It was a school full of joy, high pupil engagement and exciting learning opportunities.

Fiona Shields & the Orchard Team

INSPIRATION DAYS

UKS2 are 'On Safari' this half term. Their Inspiration Day was packed with lots of research and some super art-work.

LKS2 had great fun during their Stone Age Inspiration Day exploring cave art, carving spear heads (out of a bar of soap!) and digging up bones. To understand the work of archaeologists, they then created their own Prehistoric museum, displaying their evidence, and labelling artefacts.



Having been into their lessons, it's been great to see KS1 pupils so inspired by their 'Under the Sea' Learning Adventure - scientific research, art work, geographical research - it's all been going on! To add an extra bit of magic, the children visited Birmingham Sea Life Centre. The Penguins were a real favourite!



RSPB BIRDWATCH

On Friday Jan 24th January, EYFS and KS1 pupils will be taking part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch and therefore it is advised that children bring in a hat, scarf and gloves as well as a warm winter coat. Thank you.

REMINDER: PTA Film Night Thursday 30th January. A letter has already been circulated re: booking.

MILD ILLNESS GUIDANCE

We know that winter is one of the peak times for adults and children to come down with mild illnesses such as colds, coughs and sore throats. This is therefore the perfect time to share a resource with you which aids in making judgements about mild illness:

[NHS Guidance: Is my child too ill for school?](#)

READING FOR PLEASURE & WORLD BOOK DAY

We really understand that families are very busy and that time can be limited, but if you can only do one thing to support your child, please make it reading with and to them. Reading for pleasure has huge educational benefits.

Advanced Notice: World Book Day is on Thursday 6th March. A number of pupils have again requested dressing up for World Book Day this year. We understand that families may be under significant financial and time pressures and aim to ensure that every child can participate in World Book Day, and can celebrate the stories they love, without an expectation for families to provide a costume.

Whilst pupils *will* be invited to dress as a book character, costumes will not be judged/paraded so there is absolutely no pressure to purchase or make fancy dress outfits therefore. Some characters don't require any dressing up at all e.g. Charlie (from Charlie and the Chocolate Factory); Matilda; Alex Rider There's even a book called 'Horrid Henry and the Football Fiend' for those children who want to wear their football kit!

ATTENDANCE

Attendance during the Autumn Term was 95.8% overall. This is slightly above the expected DFE target of 95%. However, 10.8% of children had an attendance figure below 90% which is classed as 'Persistently Absent'. We would like to reduce this figure.

Often, the number of days a child is absent can accumulate without parents/carers realising just how many days have been missed. In short, all it takes is for between 6-7 days to be missed each term, and a child's attendance will fall below the 90% mark.

0 days off school in a year 0 lessons missed	100%	Perfect attendance
2 days off school in a year 10 lessons missed	99%	Excellent attendance
5 days off school in a year 25 lessons missed	97%	Good attendance
10 days off school in a year 50 lessons missed	95%	Slightly below average attendance
14 days off school in a year 70 lessons missed	93%	Poor attendance
20 days off school in a year 100 lessons missed	90%	Very poor attendance

There are strong links between regular attendance and high attainment. Missed days from school can also have an impact on the wellbeing of pupils and can result in gaps in their learning.

General ailments - Please be mindful of how many days in school are being missed due to minor illnesses, such as a cough or cold, or tummy or ear ache, for example.

Continued illness - Where absence exceeds 3 consecutive days, we would now request that medical advice is sought i.e. pharmacist, GP or 111. Absence in excess of 3 days will no longer be authorised unless medical advice has been sought in order to confirm that a pupil is unfit to attend.

Barriers - We would also like to remind parents that where any barriers to attendance are identified (e.g. anxiety), we will work with you to ensure that support is provided so that attendance is not adversely effected.

Request for Absence During Term Time - Leave of absence will not be authorised during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Punctuality - Punctuality when attending school is also crucial. All children are expected to arrive in school by 08:45 in time for morning registration, which is completed by 08:50. Lateness to lessons causes disruption to your child's learning and the learning of other pupils in the class.

A polite reminder that if your child will be absent from school, please contact school as soon as possible. 'Safe and Well' checks for pupils who are off school without any reason are undertaken by 9.20am each day and so it helps with office workload if we don't have to chase up none attendance issues. Thank you.

LEARNING TIMES TABLES

In readiness for our House Team Timestableathon at the beginning of March, we are having a big push in school on learning times tables. By the end of Year 4, children are expected to know their times tables and corresponding division facts up to 12 x 12, as stated in the National Curriculum. They should be able to recall a multiplication or division fact within about five seconds. Pupils can access Times Table Rockstars online from home - each child has their own log-in. Please contact your child's class teacher if you require more information.

REMINDERS

Book Bags - Please can we remind parents that children in KS1 and Y3 & 4 should only be bringing Book Bags into school, not large rucksacks. We don't have enough room for large bags in the cloakrooms and coats are constantly falling off overcrowded pegs, causing a trip hazard. Thank you for your anticipated support with this matter.

Labelling clothing - Please could you check that your child's jumper/cardigan and coat are labelled.

PE Uniform - No branded tracksuit tops or joggers please. Leggings should also not be worn.

DIARY DATES FOR THE SPRING TERM 2025

Tuesday 28th January - KS1 author visit: Katherine Wheatley
Thursday 30th January - PTA Movie Night
WB 3rd February - Children's Mental Health Week
Tuesday 4th February - LKS2 Prehistoric Workshop
Friday 7th February - Dress to Express (none uniform day)
Monday 10th & Thursday 13th February - Parents' Evening
Tues 11th & Wed 12th February - Y5 Environmental Crime workshop
Wednesday 12th February - ABA Team (Diana Award training)
Thursday 13th February - KS1 Atoll Marine Centre livestream
Friday 14th February - school closes
Monday 24th February - school opens
Tuesday 25th February - KS1 Aeropark visit
Wed 5th & Thurs 6th March - Y3 Beaumanor Residential
Thursday 6th March - World Book Day
7th-16th March - British Science Week
Friday 14th March - Comic Relief & Timestableathon
Wednesday 19th March - AS Creatives: Science workshops
Thursday 20th March - World Storytelling Day
Friday 21st March - World Poetry Day/House Rap Battle
Wed 26th to Fri 28th March - Y5 Whitehall Residential
Friday 28th March - PTA Mothers' Day Tea
Friday 4th April - PTA Spring Disco
Friday 11th April - School Closes