Weekly Learning Update

9th January 2026

Nursery

Happy New Year Nursery! The Nursery team hope you all had a restful festive break.

It has been a busy and exciting week in Nursery. The children we have welcomed back after the half term have come back confidently and set a fantastic example to the new starters within the Nursery. For those children who have joined the setting this week, it has been wonderful to see them explore both rooms and outside area, adjust to the routines of the day and start developing relationships with staff and peers.

With our new children joining Nursery this week, we have the exciting development of opening the second Nursery room. Children have adapted well to this. All children are exploring and learning in both rooms, accessing the learning outside and enjoying the weather this week!

The children have done incredibly well this week, getting used to different transitions of the day, learning some of the routines within the school and developing their understanding of the school values. Our five school values: Community, Growth, Integrity, Love and Respect are core to all we do and we have started sharing how these form our behaviour management system and celebrated when the children have demonstrated them.

Whilst it is cold, the children have still enjoyed seeing and playing in the snow! We ask that all children have a weather appropriate coat, gloves (or mittens) and hat with them for all sessions that they attend. All items that the children bring into the Nursery need to be named.

We hope you all a lovely weekend and we look forward to welcoming the children back next week.

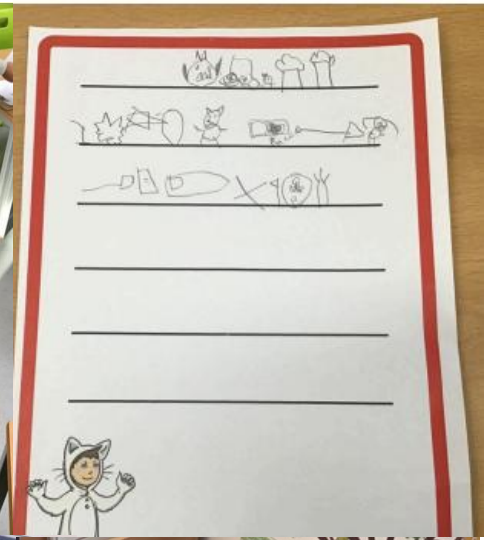
Reception (King Class and Parks Class)

What a fabulous first week Reception have had! They have settled back in well and are raring to go. They have been scientists in our investigation area, exploring light and getting arty in our creative area making masks inspired by our new story. The fine motor area has provided opportunities for the children to create a necklace. We have sailed in Max's boat alongside sorting domestic and wild animals into the Venn diagram.

In English, we have introduced our new story 'Where the Wild Things Are' with much of our learning being based around the characters. We have been creating our own story maps and can't wait to share them!

Our Maths learning has been based around addition, where we are developing an understanding of when two amounts are added we can find the total by counting them altogether.

In Expressive Arts, we have introduced the colour monster linked to feelings. We have decorated monsters using a collage technique or pastels.



We can't wait for next week and we hope you've had some fun in the snow!

Year 1 (Bell Class and Windsor Class)

Happy New Year! We hope you had a wonderful start to 2026 and enjoyed the festive break. It has been fantastic to welcome the children back to school - they have returned full of enthusiasm and ready to learn, which has made for a brilliant start to the term

We have begun our new English unit by reading *The Proudest Blue* by Ibtihaj Muhammad, an Olympic fencing medallist and the first athlete to compete wearing a hijab. The children have enjoyed recalling the key events in the story and reflecting on the things that make them proud to be themselves. They have also started creating their own *Little Book of Blue*, where they are collecting adjectives to use later in their extended sentence writing.

In Maths, we have been exploring numbers between 11 and 16. The children have represented these numbers in a variety of ways, including number sentences, cubes, Numicon and base 10 to show tens and ones. We were particularly impressed with their confidence in solving problems using these numbers.

Our new Science unit is all about everyday materials. The children amazed us with their existing knowledge and were excellent at spotting different materials around the classroom. They worked hard to classify these materials according to their properties.

In Geography, we have been thinking about the types of weather we experience in the UK. We discussed how weather changes with the seasons and why certain conditions occur at different times of the year.

Music has been lots of fun! We used a drum to count the beats (or syllables) in our names and then learned a football chant, adding actions to make it even more engaging.

In RE, we have started exploring how people seek guidance in life and how this links to Islam. We learned about the guiding principles of being a Muslim and considered how people with a Muslim worldview live in particular ways.

Thank you for your continued support—we are looking forward to an exciting term ahead!

If you are able to come and speak to the children about what you do for work, please sign up through the Google form sent home on the letter about the job's afternoon. It will take place in the afternoon of the 4th February 2026.

Year 2 (Braille Class and Kerr Class)

We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas break and that the New Year has started brilliantly for you and your families. It has been lovely welcoming the children back into school, and they have returned with great enthusiasm for their learning.

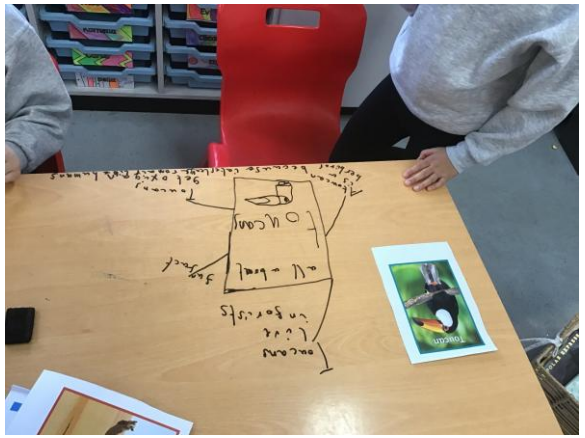
In Maths, we have begun our Money unit, focusing on identifying different coins and notes, understanding their values, making totals in different ways, grouping amounts to make counting easier and applying our addition skills to find totals.

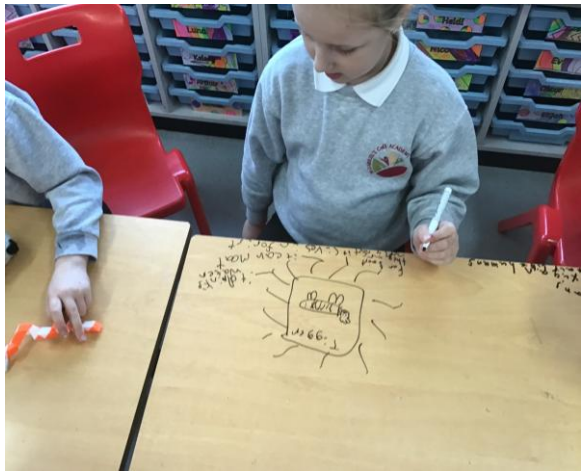
In Art, we explored the work of Rachid Khimoune and created a double-page spread to showcase information about him and his unique artistic style.

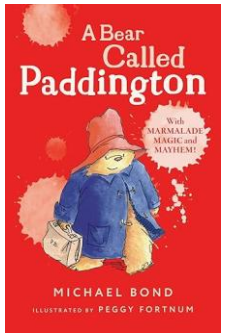
In Science, we started our Animals Including Humans topic by thinking about what all living things need to survive and the children compared animals such as lions, frogs and dolphins, recognising that although their habitats differ, they all share the same basic needs.

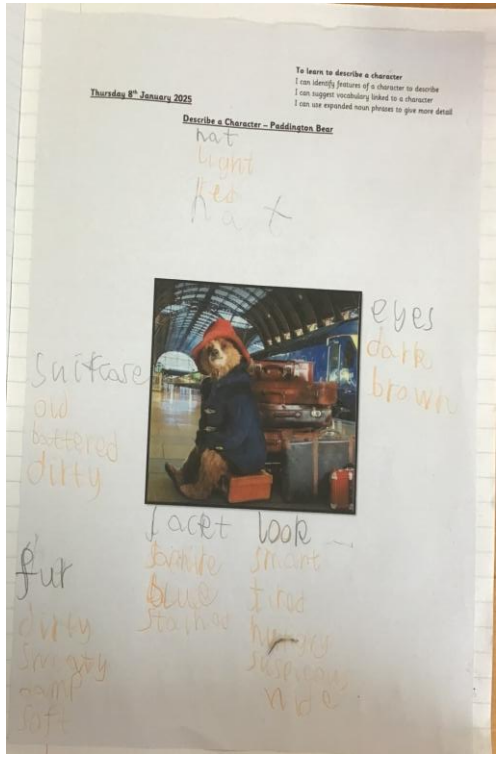
In English, we were excited to begin our new text featuring the much-loved bear Paddington; the children made predictions from clues in a short extract, visualised the character and wrote detailed descriptions to broaden their vocabulary.

In RE, we explored the question of "What is unique about the Sikh understanding of God, learning about the key teachings of Waheguru and discussing how these values - such as kindness, equality, and compassion - are shared by many people around the world, which led to some lovely reflections on the importance of shared human values.









Year 3 (Malala Class and Anning Class)

What a wonderful first week back it's been for Year 3! We have loved welcoming the children back into school and they have shown great enthusiasm in returning to their learning routines. We hope you all had a lovely Christmas and a positive start to the New Year. We are looking forward to an exciting term ahead!

This week, we have blocked our Art and DT lessons due to swimming and it has been lovely to see the children fully immerse themselves in their creative learning.

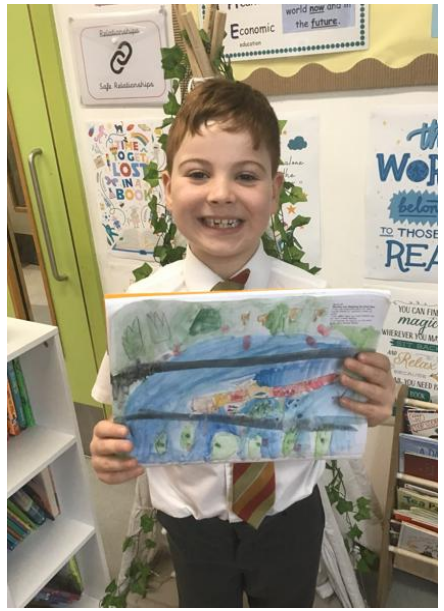
Malala class have been exploring the work of artist Sir John Everett Millais, creating artwork inspired by his famous painting Ophelia. They have also begun to design and make pneumatic toys, learning how air can be used to create movement.

Anning class have been busy creating cave art, experimenting with different textures, colours and techniques to reflect early artwork. In DT, they have been designing and making biscuit packaging, carefully considering purpose, design and presentation.

The children have shown great enthusiasm, creativity and teamwork throughout these sessions. We have been so impressed!

Just a reminder that swimming will begin next Friday 16th January for Malala class. Please see the letter sent out for details.

We hope you have a lovely weekend!



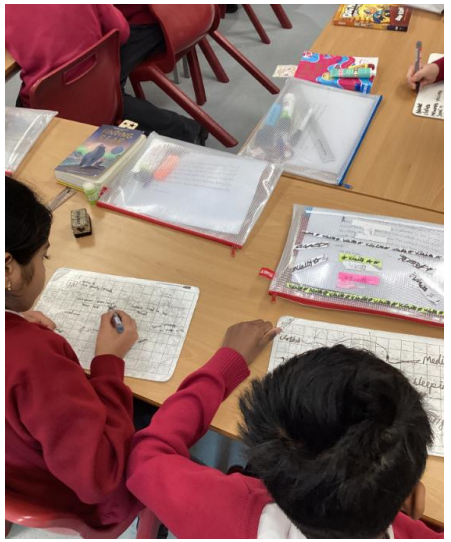
Year 4 (Tagore Class and Turing Class)

We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas break and enjoyed some family time. It's been a fantastic first week back and Year 4 have hit the ground running with lots of exciting learning!

In English, we've started our new text, *The Boy at the Back of the Class*, which has sparked some brilliant discussions. The children explored what it means to be a refugee and thought carefully about how someone in that situation might feel. They showed great empathy and curiosity! We then moved on to grammar, focusing on nouns and pronouns. We learned how writers use pronouns to avoid repetition and make their writing flow better. The children practised identifying and using these in their own sentences.

In Maths, we've been working on factors and factor pairs and how these can help us multiply larger numbers more efficiently. We also practised multiplying by 10 and 100, which really helped strengthen place value understanding. The children enjoyed spotting patterns and using mental strategies to solve problems. In Science, our new topic is Animals Including Humans. We started by learning about the seven life processes (MRS GREN) and discussed why these are essential for living things. The children then classified animals based on their characteristics, which led to some great conversations about similarities and differences in the animal kingdom.

In History, we've begun our Romans topic! First, we explored the chronology of the Roman Empire and revisited what BC and AD mean. The children then worked in groups to arrange timeline cards, showing their understanding of key events. They were really engaged and loved piecing history together like detectives!

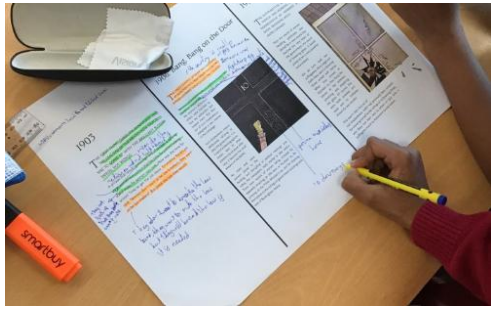


In RE, we've been exploring the Islamic worldview and asking the big question: *Do all Muslims live their lives the same way?* To help us understand, we interviewed Eve, who shared her experiences. Year 4 were incredibly respectful and asked thoughtful questions—they showed real curiosity and maturity in their discussions.

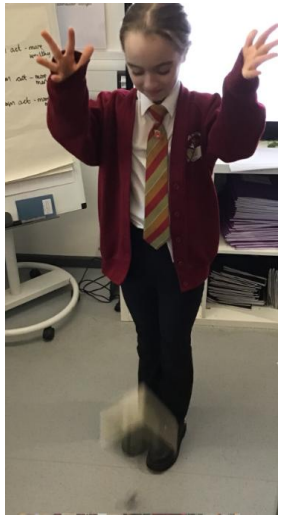
It's been a busy and exciting start to the term and we're so proud of how engaged and enthusiastic the children have been. We can't wait to see what next week brings!

Year 5 (Attenborough Class and Rauf Class)

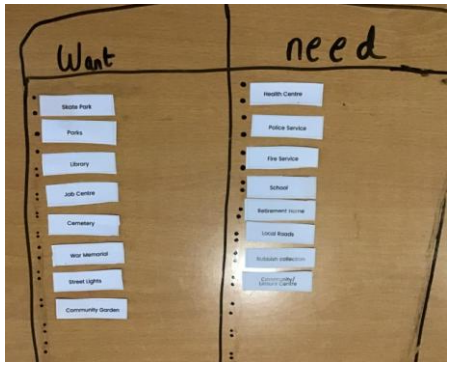
It has been lovely to welcome the children back to school this week! We hope that you all had a lovely Christmas break.



In Maths, we have begun a new unit on multiplication and division, starting with the formal method for multiplication. The children have impressed us with how much they remembered from Year 4 and have been able to build on these skills effectively. Next week, we will be moving on to more challenging work as we increase the number of digits in our calculations.



In English, our new unit focuses on persuasive writing through letter composition. We started by exploring the story behind the first women winning the right to vote, reading *Suffragette: The Battle for Equality* by David Roberts.



In Science, we have started a new topic on forces. This week, we learned about gravity and its effect when objects are dropped. The children also explored the difference between weight and mass and conducted experiments to see whether these factors influence the time it takes for an object to fall.

In History, our new topic, *Women of the World*, began with an activity using timelines and maps to understand the role of women throughout history. We discussed trends and changes in attitudes toward women over time, helping the children develop a sense of historical perspective.

In DT, we started our unit on *Moving Toys*. The children examined a range of existing products with moving parts, such as wheels, and evaluated their effectiveness. Using this analysis, they created design criteria for their own toy, which they will develop over the term.

Year 6 (Pogson Class and Walker Class)

It has been lovely to welcome the children back to school this week! We hope that you all had a lovely Christmas break.

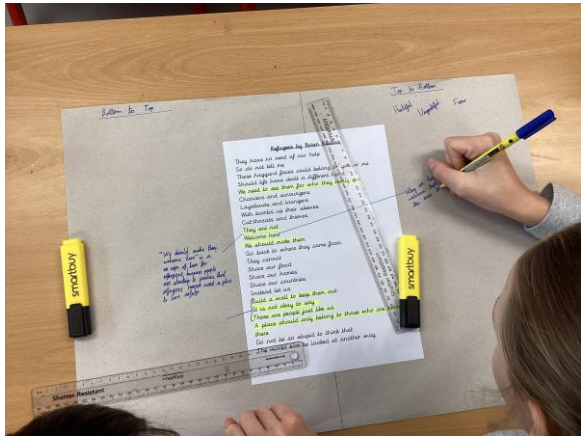
It has been an exciting start to the term as we have started several new topics across all of our subjects.

In English, we have been looking at *The Refugee Poem* by Brian Bilston. When you read it at first, it describes refugees in a negative way. However, when you read it backwards, the poem is flipped the opposite way round and describes refugees in a positive way. We explored the themes used to evoke certain emotions in the reader. We have also been exploring the purpose of the subjunctive form, and how we can use this as writers when discussing hopes and wishes which we would like to come true.

In Maths, we have started our new unit on ratio, exploring the relationship between numbers. Numbers can be expressed additively, where you use addition to go through the sequence. They can also be expressed multiplicatively, where you multiply by the same number as you progress through a sequence.

In History, we have been exploring the Early Islamic Civilisation, which began around 600AD/CE, and ended during the 13th Century. We have created a timeline to show the key events that took place during this time and explained how the civilisation expanded throughout history.

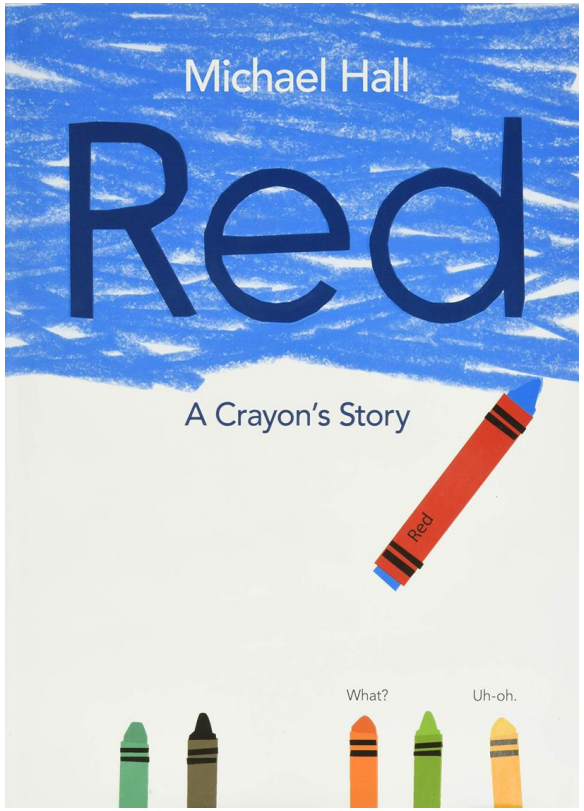
In Science, we have began to classify a variety of different species in our new unit about Living Things and Their Habitats. There are different kingdoms which all living things can be classified in to. The kingdoms include: Plantae, Animalia, Fungi, Monerans and Protists. Carl Linnaeus was the scientist who first created this system and way of classifying living things.



Collective Worship

This week in Worship Through Story, we read Red: A Crayon's Story by Michael Hall. Together, we explored the value of **integrity** and how Red's journey reminds us to stay true and honest about who we are, even when labels or expectations suggest otherwise. We also reflected on the power of **love** and encouragement, noticing how Red flourished when others celebrated and supported Red's true self. It was a beautiful reminder of the importance of authenticity and kindness in our community.

During Worship Through Song this week, we sang Give Me Oil in My Lamp. We reflected on how this joyful song carries the message of love - love that sustains, encourages and brightens our lives. We were reminded that sharing the message of love with others helps keep our own "lamps" burning brightly and strengthens our community.



Collective worship at St Gabriel's always aims to be **inspirational** for all, **invitational** to all and **inclusive** of all.

Community Events

Key Dates

Thursday 22nd January – KS1 Bedtime Stories Event
From 4:30pm to 5:30pm, children in Years 1 and 2 and their grown-ups are welcome back to school dressed in their pyjamas or cosy clothes with their favourite teddy. During the event, children will be able to enjoy snuggling up to listen to a selection of bedtime stories read by different members of staff.

Friday 23rd January – Turing Class Celebration Worship

Monday 26th January – Sound Bath Community Event
All proceeds from ticket sales will contribute towards further enrichment opportunities for the children and school projects.

Tuesday 27th January – Understanding and Managing your Child's Emotions - a Parent and Carer information session (2.15-3.10pm)

Friday 30th January – Walker Class Celebration Worship

Friday 6th February – NSPCC Number Day
Celebrate Number Day by dressing up as a robot or rockstar!

Wednesday 11th February – Parent and Carer Coffee Afternoon (Children's Mental Health Week)

Friday 12th February – Children's Mental Health Week Cake Sale

Friday 13th February – Rauf Class Celebration Worship

Recommended Read

With a reflective look at the future, learning lessons from the past and seeing the possibilities that lie there, **Begin Again by Oliver Jeffers** is perfect for the new year.

In his first picture book created for a broader audience, Oliver Jeffers combines striking artwork with powerful ideas to trace the story of humankind from its beginnings, to the present day. He then challenges readers to look beyond individual lives and consider the future of the human race as a whole.

Through bold, distinctive illustrations and insightful commentary, readers are invited to question where they are heading, how they can protect our world, and how they might change their shared story. It is a moving and thought-provoking book for anyone who wants future generations to inherit a better world.

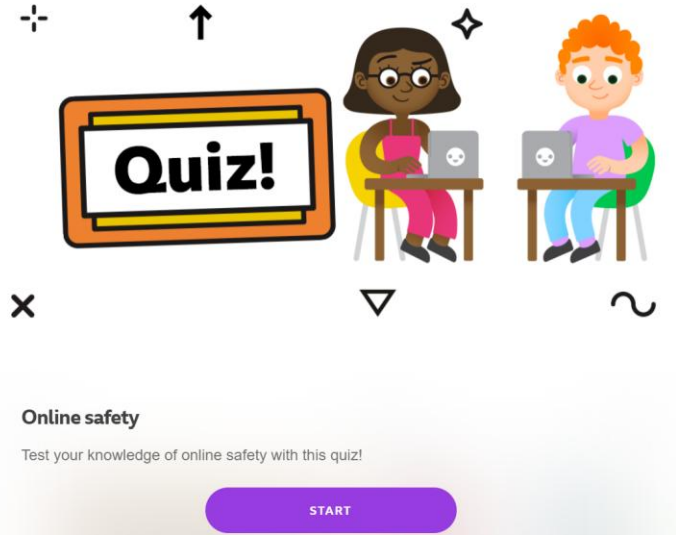
Online Safety

Start the new year by completing an online safety quiz with your child or children to ensure they are savvy when it comes to protecting their identity online.

There are lots of additional tools and resources along with this quiz on the BBC Bitesize website. Follow this link to find out more:

https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zfmhfdm#zc2hfdm

BBC BITESIZE



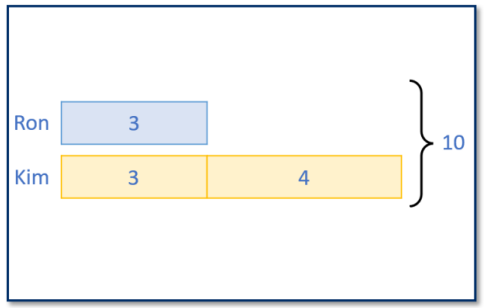
Maths Problem of the Week

KS1

1 Ron makes 3 snowmen.

Kim makes 4 more snowmen than Ron.

How many snowmen do they have altogether?

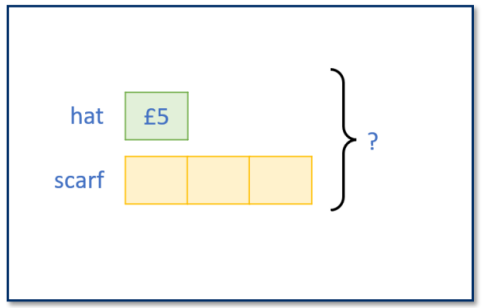


2 A hat costs £5.

The scarf cost 3 times as much as a hat.

Sam buys a hat and a scarf.

How much does Sam spend in total?

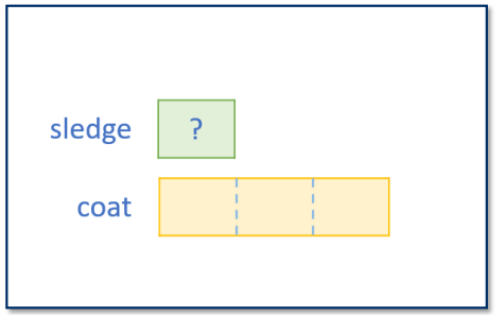


KS2

3 A winter coat costs 3 times as much as a sledge.

The total cost of the coat and 3 sledges is £150.

How much does the sledge cost?



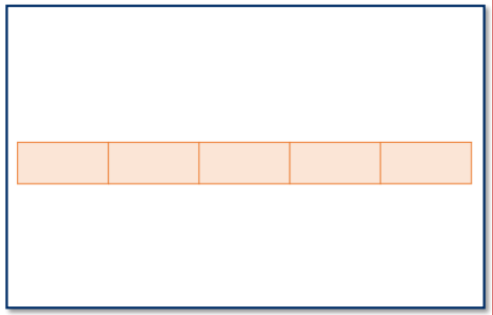
4 Rosie has a bag of hot chocolate.

She uses the same amount of hot chocolate each day.

At the end of the 10th day, she has $\frac{3}{5}$ of the bag remaining.

At the end of the 15th day, she has 400 g remaining.

What was the mass of the bag of hot chocolate at the start?



Challenge

5 Dexter and Sam are raising money for charity.

- $\frac{3}{7}$ of Dexter's money is equal to $\frac{2}{5}$ of Sam's money.
- Sam has raised £210 more than Dexter.

How much money has Sam raised for charity?

Answers

Answers

1. There are 10 snowmen altogether.
2. Sam spends £20 in total.
3. The sledge costs £25
4. There was 1,000 g of hot chocolate at the start.
5. Sam raised £3,150 for charity.

Whole School Attendance	
Attendance since September	96%
This week's attendance	94.8%
Latest Local Authority ranking	45th out of 196 schools
Latest National ranking	Top 20-30% of schools

Outstanding	**100%**	190 days of full learning All lessons complete
Very Good	**98%**	186 days of learning 4 days and 20 lessons missed
Good	**96%**	182 days of learning 8 days and 40 lessons missed
More needed	**94%**	178 days of learning 12 days and 60 lessons missed
Concerning	**92%**	174 days of learning 16 days and 80 lessons missed
Very concerning	**90%**	171 days of learning 19 days and 95 lessons missed

Whole school target is 96%

National research shows, on average, children who meet expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics have higher attendance than those who did not.

Please contact the school for support and advice if you are concerned about your child's attendance.

NHS England has provided helpful guidance for parents and carers when making the difficult decision regarding not sending a child to school.

NHS guidance- Is my child too ill for school?

Family Support

Reception Starters September 2026

To secure a Reception school place for your child starting in September 2026, you must apply by 11.59pm on 15th January 2026. Applying on time is important to help families secure a place at one of their preferred schools. To help families to prepare, Warwickshire County Council has a range of online resources, which includes a map of all the Warwickshire primary schools and guidance to find the priority school based on an address. All this, along with the application form, is available on the website at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/primaryplace.

RISE

NHS

Session Aims

- What are emotions & what are they for?
- What things get in the way of emotional regulation?
- How can I help my child to recognise & regulate?

Understanding and Managing your Child's Emotions - a Parent/Carer information session

On Tuesday 27th January, join the Mental Health in Schools Team to learn more about supporting children's emotional regulation. The session will run in the main hall, between 2.15 and 3pm. Refreshments will be provided.

Please let us know you are attending by completing the short form.

Supervision on School Grounds

Please ensure that children are supervised by a parent or carer at all times while on the playground. For drop-off and collection, children should be taken directly to their classroom doors and picked up from the same place, remaining with the parent/carer at all times whilst on the school site. We ask that children are not left to walk from the school gate to their classrooms on their own.

Children in Year 5 and Year 6 may walk to and from school independently, but only if permission has been granted by a parent or carer.

Thank you for your support in helping us maintain a safe environment for everyone.

Worried about a Child?

If you have concerns that a child is suffering any form of abuse, neglect or cruelty, contact the Warwickshire Children and Families Family Connect immediately by calling 01926 414144.
Lines are open Monday to Thursday 8.30am - 5.30pm, Friday 8.30am-5.00pm.

If you need to get in touch out of usual office hours, please contact the Emergency Duty Team immediately by calling 01926 886922.

If you think that a child is at immediate risk, contact the police immediately by calling 999.

St Gabriel's CofE Academy, Houlton Way, Houlton, Rugby, CV23 1AN

✉office@stgabrielscofeacademy.org ☎01788 222405