Weekly Learning Update

16th January 2026

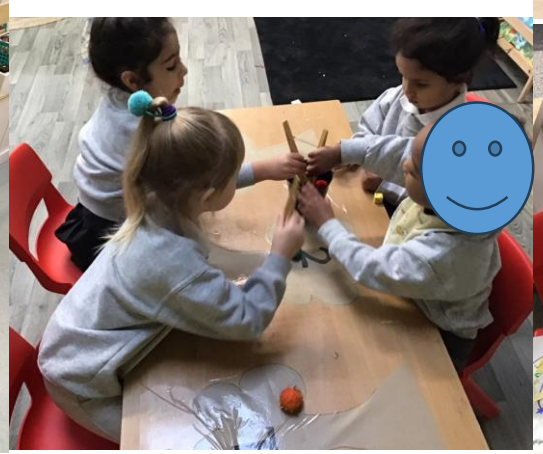
Nursery

It has been another wonderful week in Nursery! As we complete our first full week with our second classroom open, the children have continued to settle well.

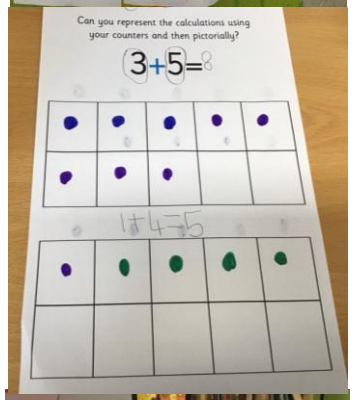
Our focus this week has been on ensuring the children are settled, confident within their sessions and embedding the routines of the setting. The children have been working hard to understand the expectations of the Nursery and developing relationships with peers and staff.

We have played a range of games each day to familiarise the children with one another and staff. Within our continuous provision, the children have enjoyed a range of activities to focus developing maths, mark making and fine motor skills. All activities have been designed to support conversations and build friendships as well, which the children have been doing brilliantly at!

We hope you have a wonderful weekend and we look forward to welcoming the children back next week. With the cold weather set to continue, we ask that children come to their sessions with warm coats, gloves, hat and possibly scarfs. All of these need to be named.



Reception (King Class and Parks Class)



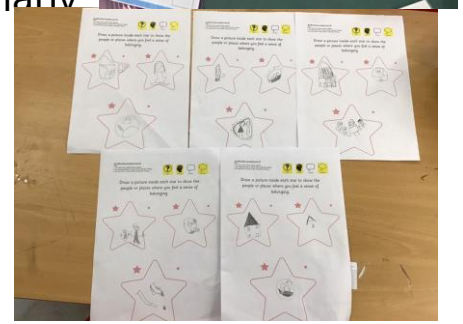
We have had another super week!

In Phonics this week, we have been assessing the children to see which phase 3 phonemes they have retained. We are super proud of the progress that they have made especially in their phase 2 blending!

In English this week, we finished our story maps for our new book 'Where the Wild Things Are.' We also started creating our own books and have been practising writing sentences using capital letters, finger spaces, full stops, sentence fingers and phoneme fingers.

This week in Maths, we have been learning to add numbers up to 10 using counters and ten-frames. The children have done brilliantly at representing the first number with red counters and the second number with yellow counters. They have then combined the two groups and used touch counting to find the total. It has been wonderful to see their confidence and understanding grow as they practise adding in this hands-on way!

In R.E this week, the children explored the question “What groups can people be part of?” as part of our Belonging and Believing unit. We talked together about what it means to belong and how we can notice when people belong together. We also discussed the many different groups people can belong to, including:
-Their family
-Friends
-Clubs and activities in the local area
-Special places such as home, places of worship, or community groups.



Year 1 (Bell Class and Windsor Class)

We've had another fantastic week of learning in Year One! Here's what we've been up to:

This week, we explored adjectives and learned how they differ from verbs and nouns. The children have really impressed us with their growing vocabulary and the wonderful word choices they've made. We've started building a bank of adjectives ready for next week, when we'll use them to write descriptive sentences linked to the story *The Proudest Blue*.

In Maths, we continued to investigate numbers between 11 and 20. The children represented these numbers using concrete objects and pictorial methods and even challenged themselves with number problems involving teen numbers. Great perseverance!

Our Science lesson focused on the difference between everyday objects and everyday materials. The children used their classification skills to sort items into groups and described them using their properties. They were very accurate and thoughtful in their observations.

We practised our drawing skills by creating observational artwork from a photograph. The children paid close attention to the lines and shapes needed to replicate the image and the results were brilliant!

In RE, we continued learning about Muslim worldviews and discussed the rules Muslims live by. Working with a partner, the children created their own set of rules to make our community and world a better place. They were especially passionate about protecting our natural environment - such thoughtful ideas!

We explored weather forecasts and why they are important. The children had a go at adding weather symbols to a map of the UK and used weather-related vocabulary to give their own forecasts. Future meteorologists in the making!

Year 2 (Braille Class and Kerr Class)

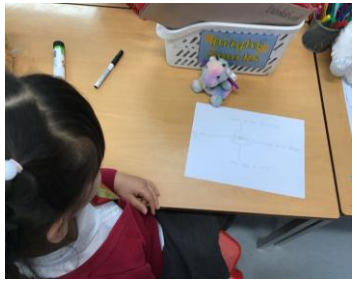
What a wonderful week it has been in Year 2. The classroom has been full of excitement, and - of course - our favourite teddy bears, who have been such delightful additions to our learning.

In English, we have been exploring key Year 2 grammar skills with the help of our teddies. The children were fascinated by each other's bears and took great care in writing and answering questions about them. We focused on using question words such as who, what, where, when, why and practised saying them clearly with the correct pronunciation. We then revisited commands, building on our understanding of imperative (bossy) verbs. The children wrote helpful instructions for their teddies about how to look after our classroom and make sure the bears settled in well.

In Maths, we continued our work on money. This week, we focused on counting totals using mixed coins and notes. The children also made amounts in different ways, showing that there is more than one combination that can make the same total. We used this to compare sets of coins and notes to decide which was worth more.

In Science, we continued thinking about what humans need to survive. We explored the difference between needs and wants, sorting examples and discussing whether these are the same for all animals. The children showed thoughtful reasoning during these conversations.

In Geography, we learned how to explain where hot and cold countries are in the world. We began naming different climate zones and talked about how the equator links to temperature and climate. The children enjoyed exploring maps and spotting patterns across the globe.



Year 3 (Malala Class and Anning Class)

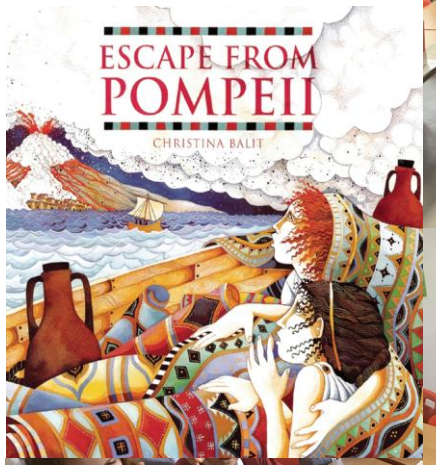
It's been another brilliant week for Year 3!

In English, we have begun our exciting new book 'Escape from Pompeii', where the children have been learning to make predictions, infer meaning, recognise the features of a diary and recognise and apply the present perfect tense. Through a dramatic hook involving a mysterious message from 79 AD, the children imagined life in Pompeii before the eruption and explored how people might have felt as disaster struck. They examined the front cover to predict characters, settings and dangers and brought the story to life by creating freeze frames of life before the eruption, the moment before the volcano erupted and attempts to escape. They really stepped into their characters' thoughts to deepen their understanding and prepare for diary writing, inspired by this powerful real-life event.

In Maths, we have started our Multiplication and Division unit, exploring equal groups, arrays and counting in 2s, 5s and 10s.

In Geography, we explored how volcanoes are formed. To help us to understand how eruptions work, we carried out a volcano experiment using baking soda, vinegar and washing-up liquid. When the vinegar reacted with the baking soda, carbon dioxide gas was released, causing a fizzy eruption that modelled how pressure builds up and forces material out of a volcano.

Malala class also took part in their first swimming lesson, developing their water confidence and Anning class started their new Art topic, practising their sketching skills inspired by the style of John Millais and focusing on careful observation and detail.



Year 4 (Tagore Class and Turing Class)

In English this week, we explored emotive language and discussed how writers use it to create impact and connect with the reader. We also learned about the key features of a diary entry. To help us prepare for our writing next week, the children took part in role-play activities, stepping into character and thinking deeply about thoughts and feelings they might express in a diary.

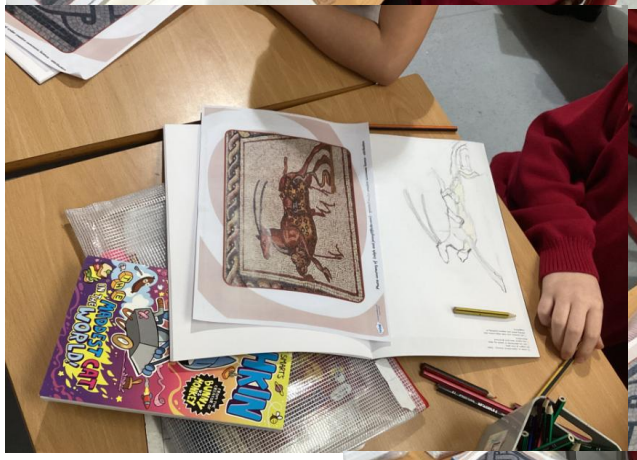
In Maths, we have been multiplying and dividing by 10 and 100. We used our knowledge of place value and related facts to tackle more complex problems with confidence.

Our focus in RE has been on individual worldviews. The children reflected thoughtfully on challenges they have faced and the reasons behind the choices they made, developing a better understanding of how experiences shape perspectives

We began our new art topic on *Roman mosaics*. After studying a range of examples and discussing what makes them effective, the children sketched their own mosaic designs, considering which shapes to include and how to structure their patterns.

In Music, we listened and sang along to *The Doot Doot Song*. The children then started adding chords using the glockenspiels, working on timing, coordination and ensemble skills.

This week in History, we used maps to investigate how the Roman Empire expanded over time. The children tracked which countries were conquered and developed a clearer sense of how vast the empire became.



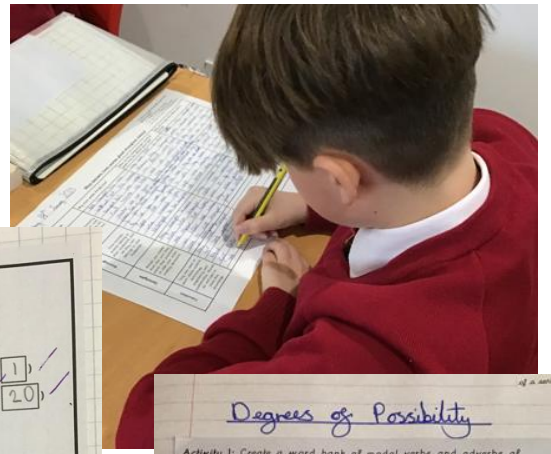
Year 5 (Attenborough Class and Rauf Class)

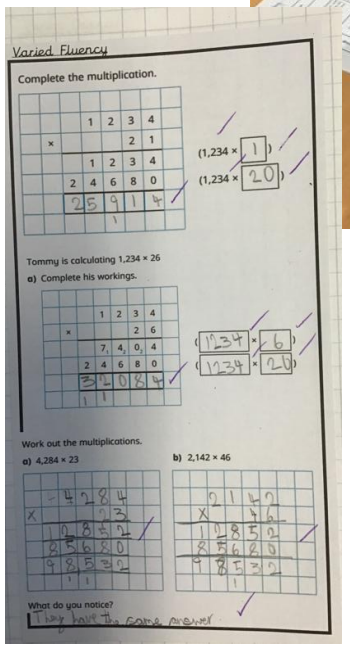
In English this week, we have been focusing on grammar skills in preparation for writing our letters. The children have been working on using Standard English, making sure they choose correct phrases such as *"should have"* instead of *"should of"*. We have also practised selecting the right words for is/are, was/were and have/has. In addition, the class has explored modal verbs (e.g., *would, should, may, will*) and how they can be used effectively in writing. We have also looked closely at the language and structural features of letters, so that everyone knows what to include when planning their own letter next week.

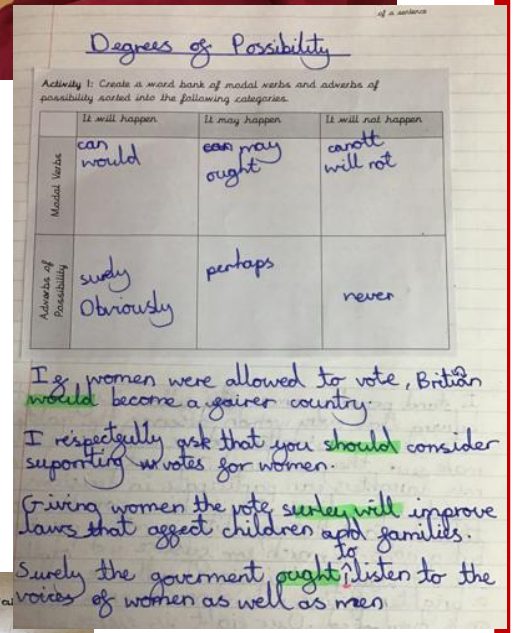
In Maths, we have continued practising multiplication using the formal written method, working with up to four-digit numbers multiplied by two-digit numbers. This process involves several steps and we have been really impressed with the children's perseverance when it became challenging. If they made a mistake, they worked hard to spot the error in their calculation and correct it effectively. We are now ready to move on to using a formal method for division and the children are excited to take on this new challenge!

This week in History, we explored the question: *"What barriers have women faced throughout history?"* The children were highly engaged in this lesson, which sparked a healthy debate about historic attitudes towards women - why these attitudes existed and, most importantly, why they needed to change. This discussion linked beautifully to our English learning on the Suffragettes, helping the children make meaningful connections between historical events and the fight for equality.

In Music, we began our new unit based on the song *"Madina tun Nabi"* - a catchy modern Nasheed (Islamic song) featuring a two-part chorus. The children listened carefully and discussed key musical elements such as the chorus, verses, changes in tempo, repetition and the use of *call and response*. We then practised singing the song, focusing on the call-and-response sections we had identified. The children really enjoyed exploring these features and developing their vocal skills.

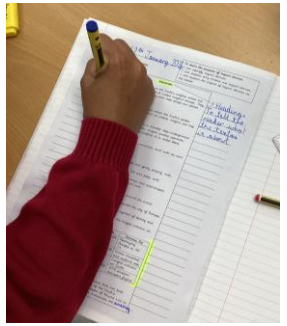


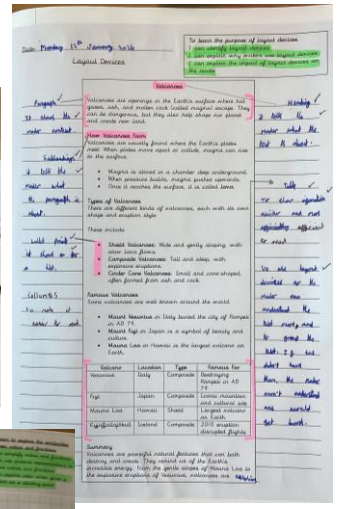




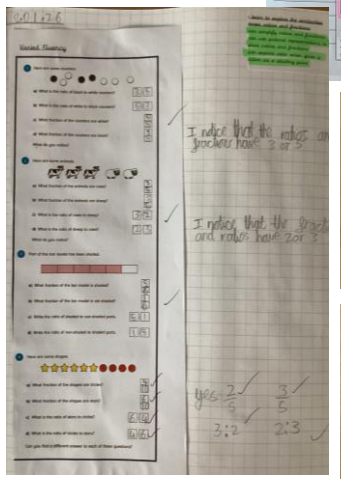
Year 6 (Pogson Class and Walker Class)

In English this week, we have been exploring how writers use layout devices, such as bullet points, paragraphs, tables and headings, in non-fiction texts to organise the information clearly for the reader to understand. Next week we will be writing a campaign leaflet, so we have also spent some time looking at a range of campaign leaflets to see how layout devices and persuasive techniques are used.

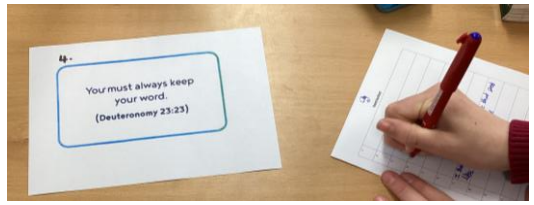




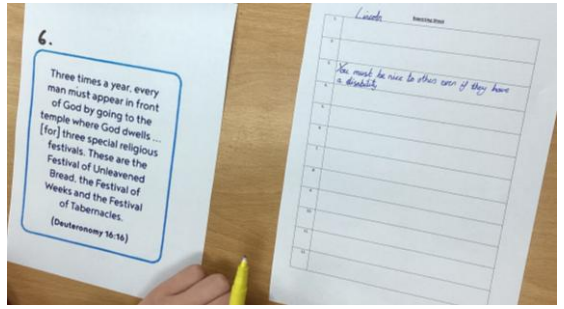
In Maths, we have continued learning about ratio, by exploring the link between fractions and ratio. As the week progressed, we were learning about how we can use ratio to complete a scale drawing of a variety of shapes.



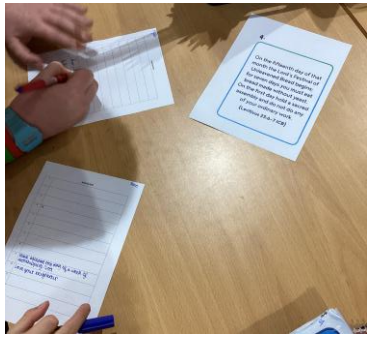
In Science, we have investigated classification and how scientists use classification to organise species into their different kingdoms, classes and groups. We used liquorice to explore this, by looking at a variety of factors, including shape, colour and size, which is a similar process to how living things are classified.



In RE, we have started a new topic, which focuses on the question: How far does following God bring freedom and justice? We looked at what it means to have a two-way agreement and how Christians can have this with God. We discussed how the ten commandments act as a guide for Christians in their two-way agreement with God and the areas of life they focus on.



In DT, we created a design for a bowl. We used the mood boards we created in last week's lesson and chose our favourite parts to create our final design. It was also really important that our design met the brief and specific criteria which we wanted our bowls to have.

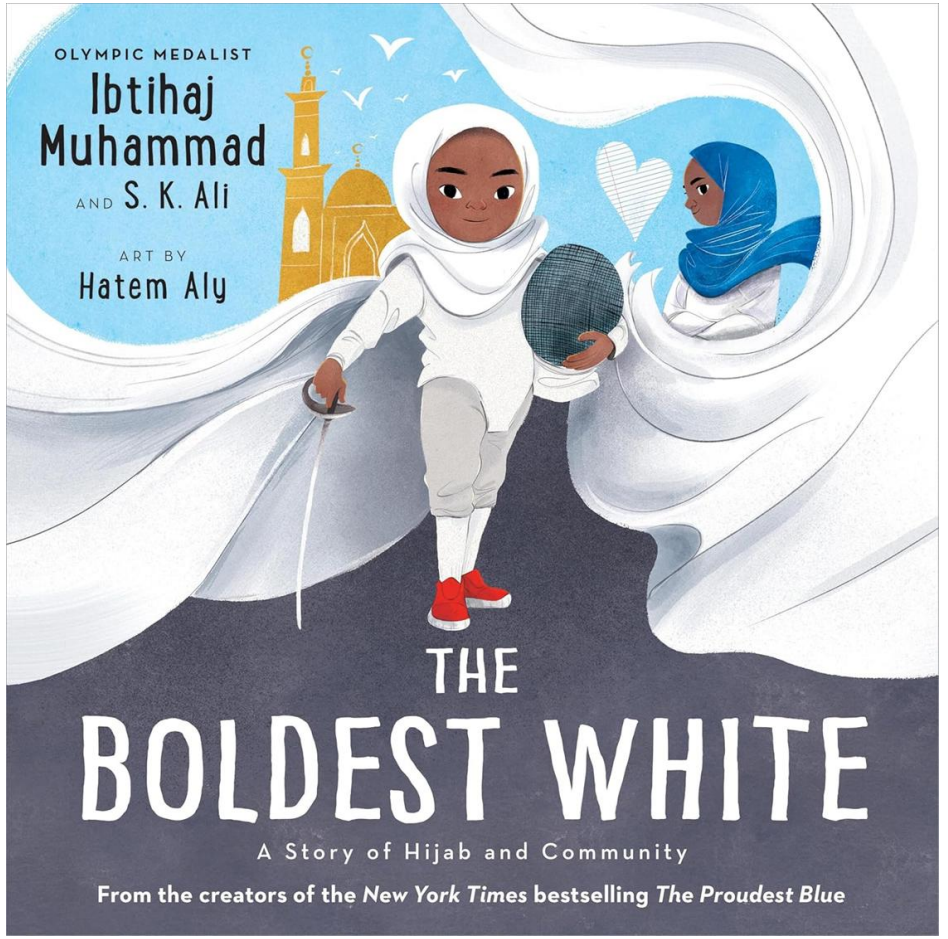


Collective Worship

During Worship Through Story, we celebrated World Religion Day, which falls on 18th January. We read *The Boldest White*, a story that teaches us that being proud of who we are helps others feel proud too. World Religion Day teaches us that understanding others helps us all live together in harmony. We spoke about three of our school values in particular: Respect, Love and Community.

This week, we've also spoken about change: planned and unexpected. We discussed the feelings we may experience with change and how it may take time for us to feel comfortable with the change.

During Worship Through Song, we continued singing Give Me Oil in My Lamp.



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

Community Events

Monday 26th January 2026
7pm until 8.30pm
18+

Sound Bath Meditation

With Evelyn Frain

Class Rate
£17

Join us for an hour of deep relaxation, where you will receive the benefits of sound bath.

Refreshments available afterwards.

Taking place at St Gabriel's C of E Academy. Houlton, Rugby

To reserve a place, please contact office@stgabrielscofeacademy.org

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)

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

Friday 13th February – Rauf Class Celebration Worship

Family Support

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.

This week's Family Information Service newsletter includes information about:

•A winter safety guide from Child Accident Prevention Trust
•Barnardo's winter wellness workshops
•Voice of Warwickshire

and much more!

Reading for Pleasure

In celebration of the **National Year of Reading**, we're delighted to introduce a new addition to our learning updates. Each half term, we will be sharing **Bookdrop** - a free children's book newsletter created by **Authorfy** - to share with families.

Bookdrop is designed to inspire a love of reading and will feature a wide range of engaging content, including interviews with different authors and illustrators, exclusive extracts or posters, a showcase of the latest children's books and book reviews written by both children and teachers.

Each issue will also include a dedicated page from **The Open University Reading for Pleasure team**, offering practical tips, ideas and advice on how you can support and encourage reading at home.

We hope this newsletter will spark conversations about books, introduce children to new authors, and help make reading an enjoyable part of everyday family life.

The link to the first issue is below and we hope you enjoy exploring it together.

https://authorfy.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/01/BOOKDROP-age-5-11-JanFeb-2026-High-Res.pdf

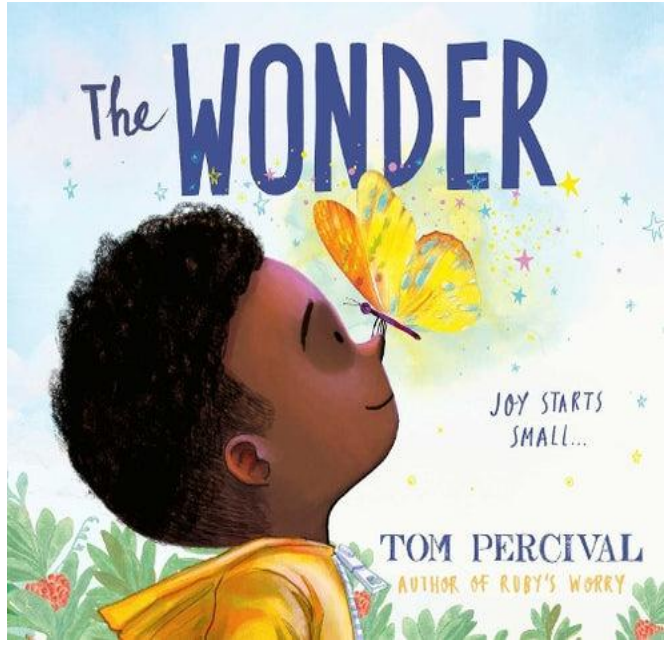
GO ALL IN.
National Year of Reading 2026

Recommended Read

The Wonder by bestselling author-illustrator Tom Percival is a poignant and beautifully illustrated picture book that gently reminds readers to notice the small, extraordinary moments hidden inside everyday life.

Daniel is having a terrible day. Rain clouds follow him everywhere, puddles soak his shoes and nothing seems to be going right. But when he hears a soft, unexpected sound of music beneath the rain, Daniel begins to look more closely at the world around him.

Little by little, he discovers moments of joy and wonder that can brighten even the darkest day.



Online Safety

There are lots of social media websites and apps people use to chat, comment, share pictures and game with their friends.

Many parents and carers wonder when is the best age to let their child have a social media account. Some don't want their children to have underage accounts. Others may have decided their child is not quite ready for social networking, even if their child is begging them. Once children reach secondary school, they're likely to come under growing peer pressure to stay in touch with friends online.

If you are thinking about social media for your child, what should you consider and how can you help and support them? Follow the below link to find out more:

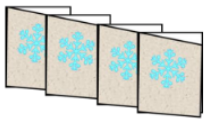
https://www.ceopeducation.co.uk/parents/articles/is-my-child-ready-for-social-media#:~:text=The%20age%20requirements%20are%20there,online%20services%20without%20parental%20permission.

Maths Problem of the Week

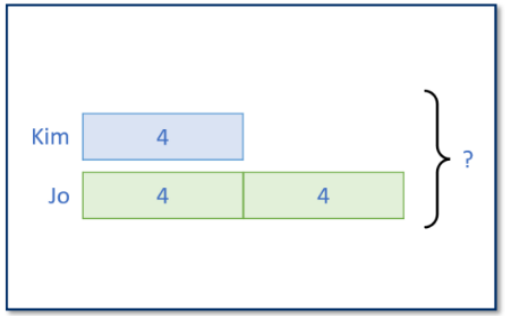
KS1

1 Kim has 4 cards.

Jo has twice as many cards as Kim.



How many cards do they have altogether?

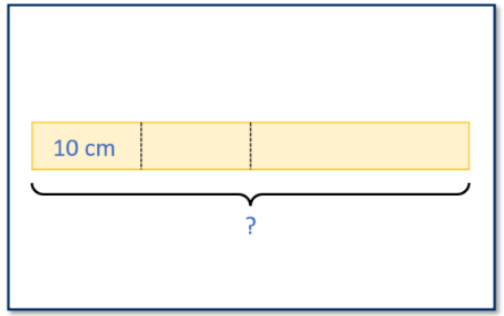


2 A strip of paper is cut in half.

One part is then cut in half again.

The length of one short piece is 10 cm.

How long was the strip of paper at the start?

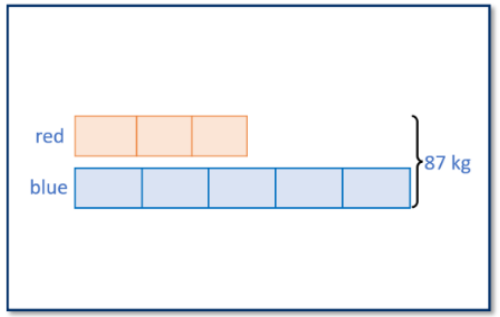


KS2

3 The total mass of three red gifts and five blue gifts is 87 kg.

Each red gift has a mass of 9 kg.

What is the mass of one blue gift?

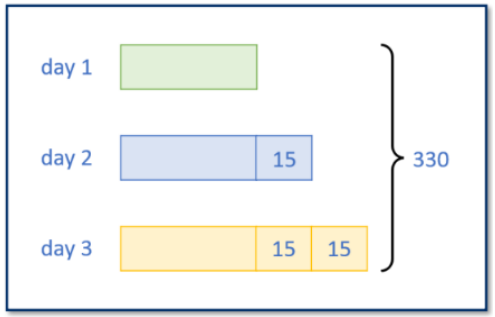


4 A baker makes gingerbread cookies over three days.

Each day he makes 15 more cookies than the previous day.

In total he bakes 330 cookies over the three days.

How many cookies does he bake on day 2?



Challenge

Alex, Jack and Tommy are selling candles at a winter market.

- Jack sells $2\frac{1}{3}$ times as many candles as Alex.
- Tommy sells half as many candles as Jack.
- Altogether they sell 189 candles.

How many candles does each person sell?

Answers

Answers

1 They have 12 cards altogether.

2 The strip was 40 cm at the start.

3 The mass of one blue gift is £12

4 He bakes 110 cookies on day 2.

5 Alex sells 42 candles.
Jack sells 98 candles.
Tommy sells 49 candles.

Whole School Attendance	
Attendance since September	%
This week's attendance	%
Latest Local Authority ranking	25th out of 188 schools
Latest National ranking	Top 10-20% 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.

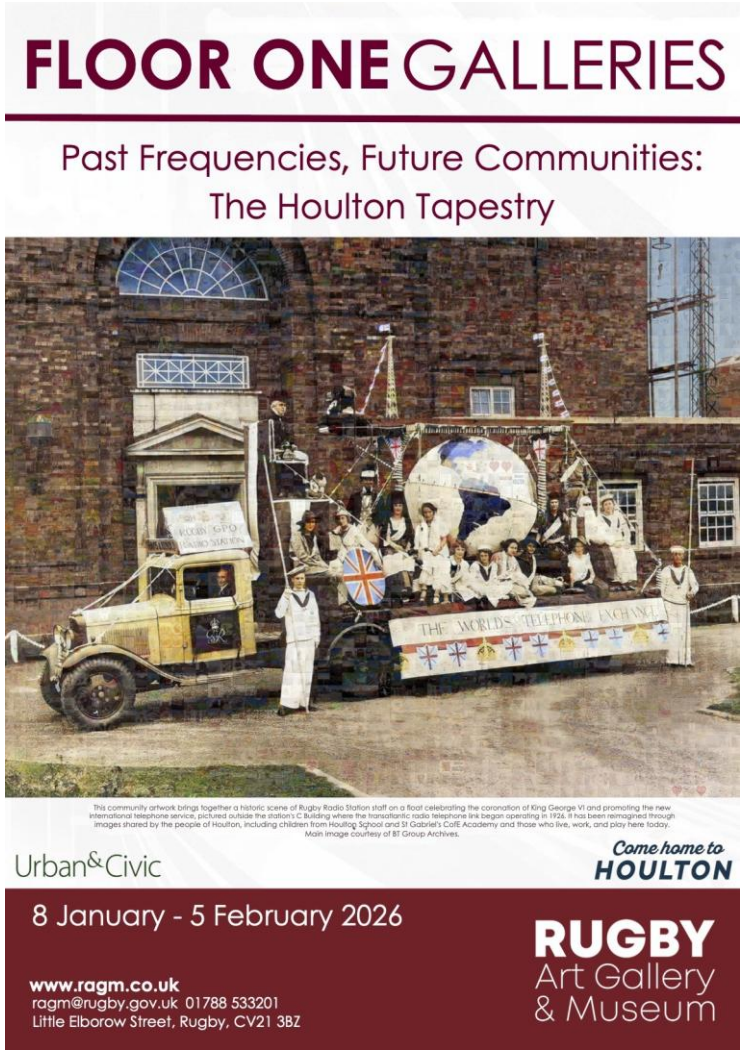
Please contact the school for support and advice if you are concerned about your child's attendance.

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?

Past Frequencies, Future Generations at Rugby Art Gallery

The exhibition is now open at Floor One Galleries, between 8th January and 5th February 2026.



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