Weekly Learning Update

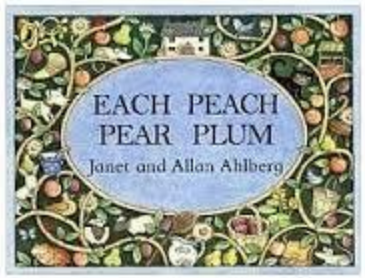
21st November 2025

Nursery

We have been thinking about rhyming words this week within our English sessions to support our learning of the key text 'Each, Peach, Pear, Plum.' Children have enjoyed exploring the concept of a rhyming word and have played a range of games to support hearing rhyming words.

We have also explored the different characters in the book and thinking about how each character can be described by features of their appearance. This could include distinctive items of clothing or hair colour.

We have been thinking about differentiating sounds within our sessions this week and using music to support this. We sang a range of songs to support hearing different words and linked these to actions to be able to differentiate different sounds, building up different words, which have different meanings.



The children have enjoyed exploring the areas of learning this week. With the colder weather set to continue, we still aim to be outside daily. Please ensure children have warm coats and mittens (or gloves, if they can put them on independently) that are named.

Children have been practising their mark making in sand and also explored making their very own play dough people, complete with features!

Reception (King Class and Parks Class)

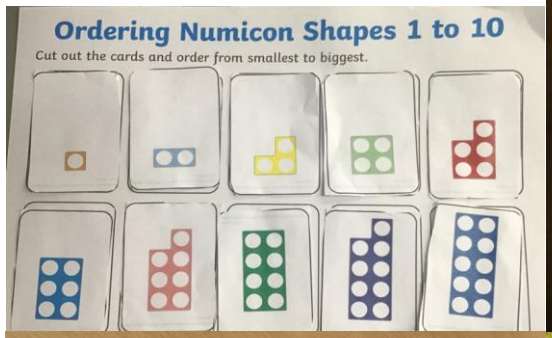
We have had another brilliant week in Reception!

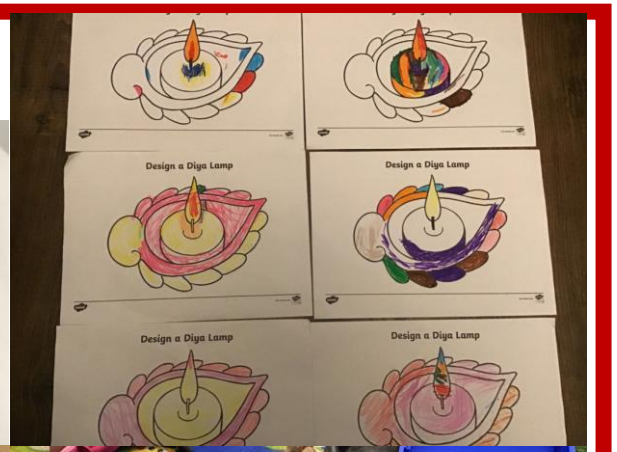
In Phonics this week, we explored the phonemes j, v, w and x. The children have been working hard on blending these sounds to read simple words and segmenting them to support their spelling. Their confidence is growing beautifully!

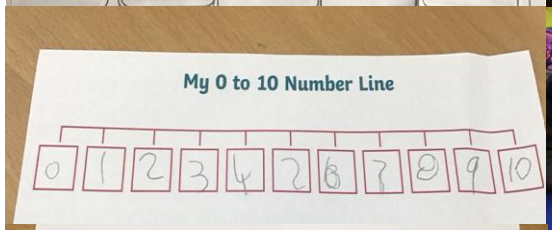
Our storytelling has taken an exciting twist in English this week! We transformed the much-loved "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" into our very own "We're Going on a Snake Hunt." The children loved creating new plot ideas, inventing actions and helping to create a class story map. It's been wonderful to see their imaginations shine.

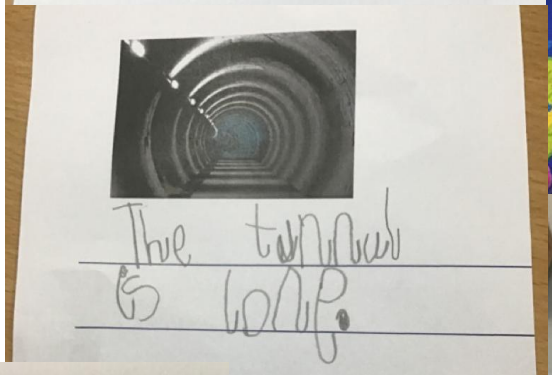
In Maths, we focused on ordering numbers to 10. Using Numicon, the children explored how numbers fit together and practised arranging them in ascending order.

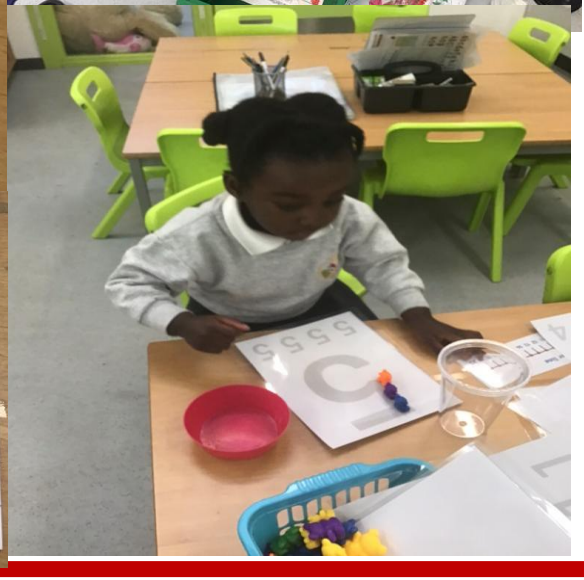
This week we learnt the story of Rama and Sita, discussing its important message that good triumphs over evil. The children then enjoyed designing and decorating their own colourful diyas.

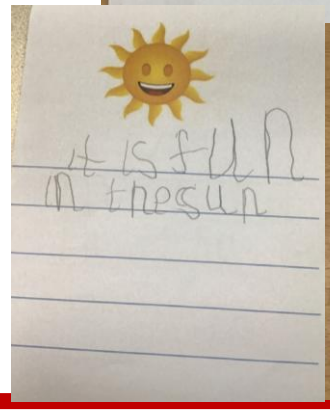


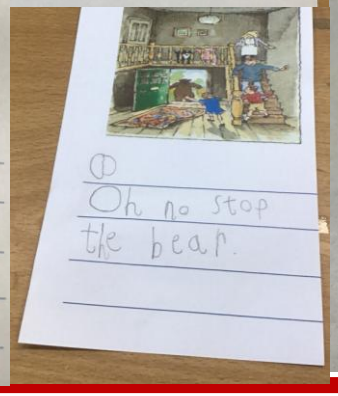












Year 1 (Bell Class and Windsor Class)

This week in writing, we've been creating our own short narratives inspired by *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter. The children invented mischievous characters and even changed some events to give the story their own twist! We are so proud of their amazing ideas and the fantastic writing stamina they've shown.

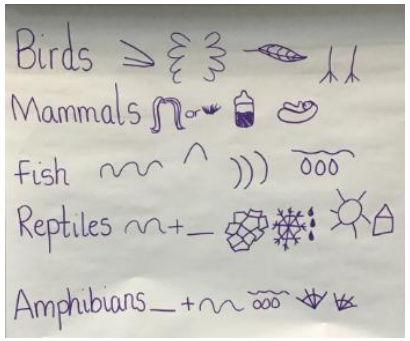
In Maths, we explored subtraction by finding out "how many are left" when taking away from a group of objects. We also learned how to subtract using a number line, remembering to count backwards. The children noticed this is the opposite of what we do when adding! We applied this to maths stories too, interpreting pictorial representations—great problem-solving all round!

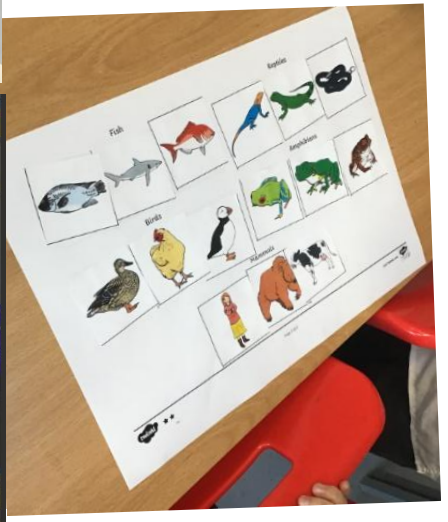
Our focus in RE was the Golden Rule: *"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."* We looked at different scenarios and discussed whether the rule was followed. The children shared thoughtful ideas about why kindness and compassion are so important.

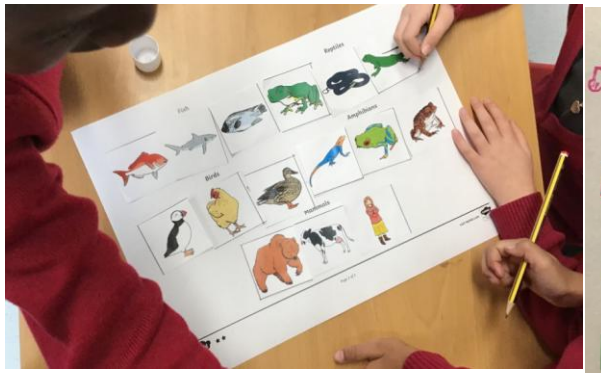
In Science, we've been classifying animals and thinking about the features that make them different. The children wowed us with their knowledge and amazing animal facts! They confidently sorted animals into birds, fish, mammals, reptiles and amphibians—super scientists in the making!

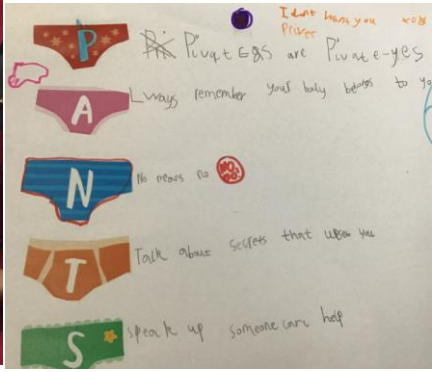
We became sculptors in Art this week! Inspired by the sculptor David Gosling, the children used their imagination and skills to create sculptures out of tinfoil. It was wonderful to see their creativity shine as they let their ideas flow.

Thank you for your continued support—have a lovely weekend.









Year 2 (Braille Class and Kerr Class)

Year 2 have worked really hard this week across all their learning.

In English, we have continued our lessons based on the Bear and the Piano. We have planned our diary entries and acted in the role of the bear to help bring our writing to life. We then applied what we have learnt to write our own diary later in the week.

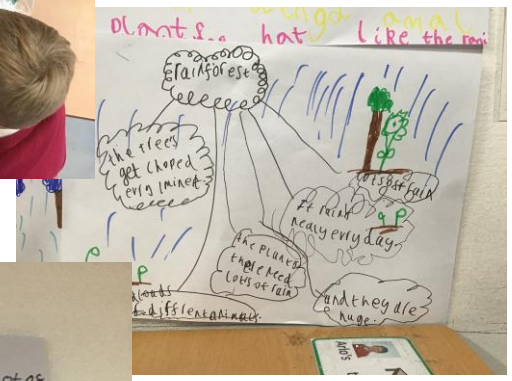
In Maths, we have focused on adding two digit numbers using base 10 and pictures to help us to understand how to cross over into the next 10. We have worked really hard to show our understanding of how to change ones into tens and ones.

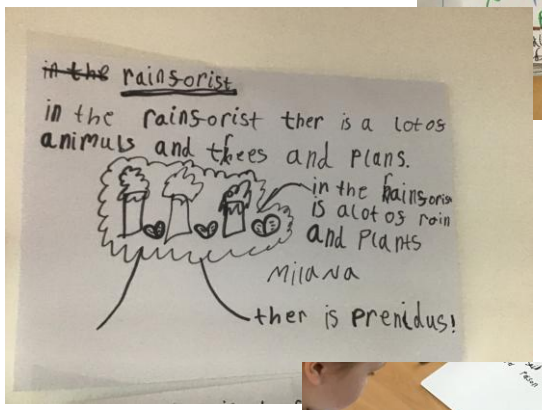
We enjoyed exploring the habitat of the rainforest in Science. We discovered what the habitat was like and which animals we might find there. We thought about why those animals were suited to that environment.

In History, we researched all about Guy Fawkes, one of the important members of the Gun Powder Plot. We learnt about his childhood, his role in the plan and what happened when he got caught. We created factfiles based on the information we found.

In PSHE this week, our learning centred around bullying and what it means. We discovered that bullying was when someone was being hurt over and over again on purpose. We explored different scenarios to identify whether it was bullying or not.

Finally, in RE, we learnt about what Jesus taught about peace. We explored four types of peace and reflected on what this meant for how people should treat themselves and others.





Year 3 (Malala Class and Anning Class)

It has been another brilliant week for Year 3!

In English, we have been writing our own narrative openings, based on The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. The children created their own characters, portal and new world, using rich description to bring their ideas to life. They developed clear and exciting storylines, explored how to build tension and atmosphere and used speech to move the action forward. The children also focused on expanding their vocabulary, using expanded noun phrases, powerful adjectives and carefully chosen verbs to make their writing more vivid and engaging.

In Maths this week, we have continued to work on addition and subtraction of 3-digit numbers involving an exchange. The children practised using formal written methods, partitioning and place value knowledge to support their calculations.

In Science, we have been learning to classify different animals based on their skeletons. The children can now identify vertebrates and invertebrates, name and describe the different types of skeletons and confidently classify and group animals according to these features. They explored how skeletons provide structure, protection and support, developing their scientific vocabulary and observation skills throughout.

In Geography, we have been using Ordnance Survey maps to build our knowledge about Houlton. We looked at standardised OS symbols and then planned a route from school to the Tuning Fork.

Malala class also did a wonderful job of sharing their learning about the Stone Age during our Celebration Collective Worship this week. They spoke confidently with enthusiasm and Miss Merrick was very proud of them all. Thank you for coming to share this – we hope you enjoyed it!

Year 4 (Tagore Class and Turing Class)

In English this week, we began our learning journey on narrative texts. We will focus on forming a prequel to 'The Beanstalk Murder' by PG Bell. So far we have been detectives and found clues as to what the story may be about, identified features of a narrative text and learned about the purpose of direct speech. We are very excited to read more of the story and develop our story telling skills.

We have been practising our times tables this week by learning all about the 3, 6, 9 and 7 times tables! We have learned to show our understanding using arrays and developed our understanding of fact families to consolidate our multiplication knowledge.

Our Science lesson this week investigated the melting points of different types of chocolate. We followed a prescribed process and made sure to conduct the test in a fair manner to allow for replicable results if anybody wishes to repeat our experiment.

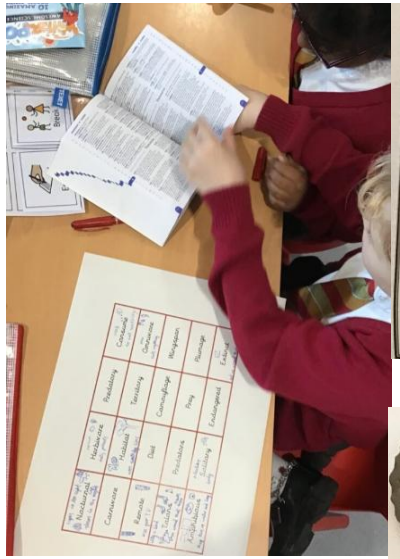
For RE this week, we delved into how different members of the Jewish organised worldview worship and what they believe about God. We asked tonnes of questions, made lots of important notes and most importantly developed our understanding of the world and those around us.

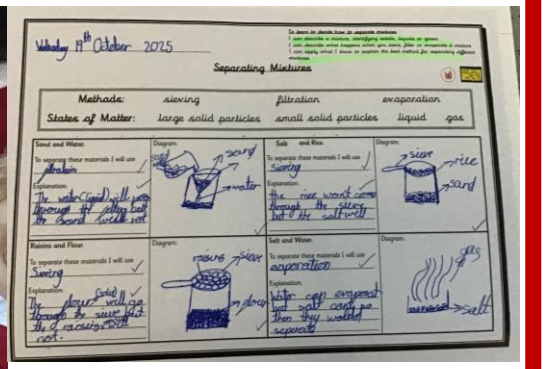
DT was a tasty lesson this week as we were able to try multiple types of bread in preparation for developing our own breads. We tasted and described what we experienced making sure to log it all down so that we can inform our next steps.

Today, we visited Coombe Abbey to complete a river study that ties into our learning all about rivers of the United Kingdom!

Year 5 (Attenborough Class and Rauf Class)

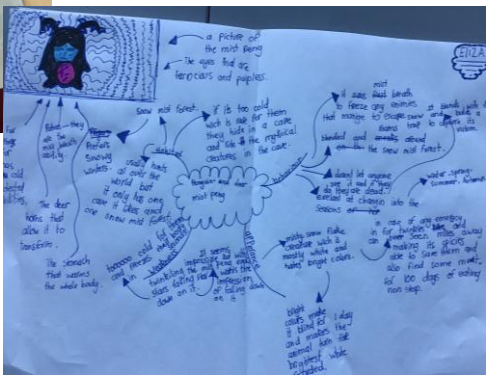
In English this week, we explored the features of information texts, focusing on how technical language can enhance our writing. We discussed vocabulary such as *carnivore*, *amphibious* and *plumage*, using dictionaries to find accurate definitions. Building on this, the children began planning their own information texts about a unique creature they invented from the Archipelago. They considered key aspects such as habitat, diet, appearance, abilities, strengths and weaknesses. We are excited to develop these plans into our final pieces of writing next week.





In Maths, we have continued our work on fractions. We began by comparing and ordering fractions less than one before progressing to fractions greater than one. To support this, we have been using the skill of converting to equivalent fractions, which helps us make accurate comparisons. The children are now ready to move on to calculating with fractions as our next step.

In DT, we took a short break from our bird hide project to create something special using clay for the upcoming Christmas fair. The children had great fun experimenting with a range of tools and techniques to shape and decorate their pieces. They are very excited about selling their creations in a few weeks! There's a sneak peek in the photos—see if you can guess what we've made.



In Science, we investigated how to separate different mixtures, such as sand and rice or sugar and water. The children explored a range of methods, including sieving, filtration and evaporation, and discussed which techniques would be most effective for each mixture. This helped deepen their understanding of how materials can be separated based on their properties.

Year 6 (Pogson Class and Walker Class)

In English, we have been writing evacuation letters with the purpose of informing. The children chose different perspectives, such as a child writing to their parent, a parent writing to their evacuated child, or a host family writing to the parents of the children they were caring for. This gave them a chance to practise empathy and clear communication in their writing.

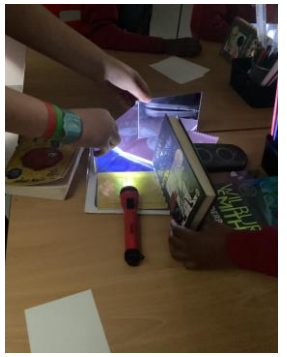
In Maths, we have consolidated our skills in adding and subtracting mixed numbers, using bar models to represent the learning. Towards the end of the week, we then moved on to multiplying fractions by integers, before beginning to explore multiplying fractions by other fractions.

In RE, we explored the importance of Mecca to those with Muslim worldviews, learning why it is such a significant place of worship and pilgrimage. We discussed the rituals and practices that Muslims take part it during their pilgrimage to Mecca and the spiritual feelings that might associate with it.

In History, we have researched evacuation during World War II, deepening their understanding of the experiences of children and families at that time.

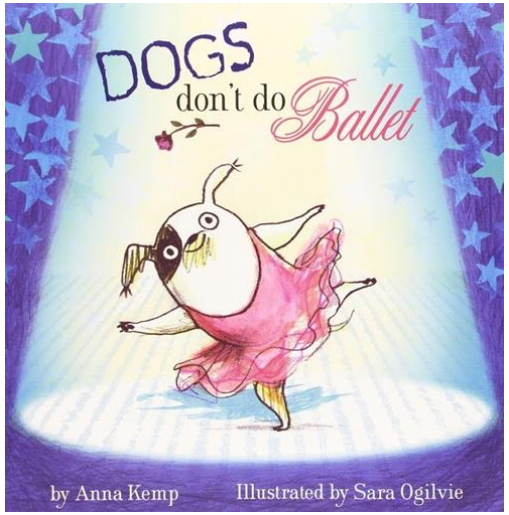
In Science, we investigated reflection by using torches and mirrors to change the direction that light travels. The investigations helped us to see how light behaves and how reflections are formed.

In Art, we have experimented with materials to make a simple picture, using cellophane and tissue paper to mimic a stained-glass window. Over the coming weeks, we will be making our own stained-glass window!



Collective Worship

In Worship Through Story, we read *Dogs Don't Do Ballet.* In the story, Biff dreams of being a ballerina. Even though lots of people tell him he can't be a ballerina, he doesn't give up on his dream. We discussed stereotyping and how it can be unfair to use these labels. We shared the importance of embracing diversity as everyone is unique!



During Worship Through Song, the children were singing Believe, using British Sign Language. The song is an uplifting ballad about self-belief, hope and resilience. It encourages listeners to trust in their potential, dream big and keep going even when challenges arise.

Malala Class led this week's Celebration Collective Worship on Friday. They shared their learning about the Stone Age through drama, music and poetry.

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

Year 5 and 6 Reading Escape Room

On Thursday, our Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, along with their parents and carers, took part in our exciting Reading Escape Room event. Together, families worked brilliantly to solve a series of puzzles using clever thinking, problem-solving and fantastic reading skills.

Children cracked codes inspired by popular children's books, searched for hidden clues and pieced together riddles using their knowledge of stories they love.

Working as teams, families navigated each challenge until they finally discovered the precious dragon egg and saved the future of the Archipelago!

Because of their brilliant effort, each class earned two brand-new books for the class library. Miss Merrick will be visiting next week so the children can choose their well-deserved prizes!

Thank you to everyone who joined us. It was wonderful to see families reading, imagining and escaping into new adventures together.

Recommended Read

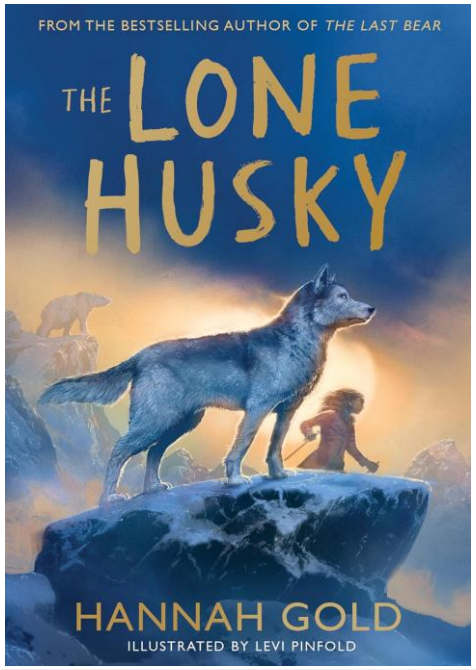
The Lone Husky by Hannah Gold

From the bestselling author of *The Last Bear* and *Finding Bear* comes another unforgettable Arctic adventure by Hannah Gold.

We're back in Svalbard with April, her dad and Bear - all a little older, wiser and more at home in their icy world. After saying goodbye to Bear for the winter, April feels lost. But when a new husky arrives at Hedda's yard - wary, skittish, and afraid of people - April makes it her mission to help him heal and find his place in the pack.

When Hedda suffers a fall and can't compete in an epic sled race, April bravely steps forward to take her place - facing challenges, old rivals, and the wild Arctic itself.

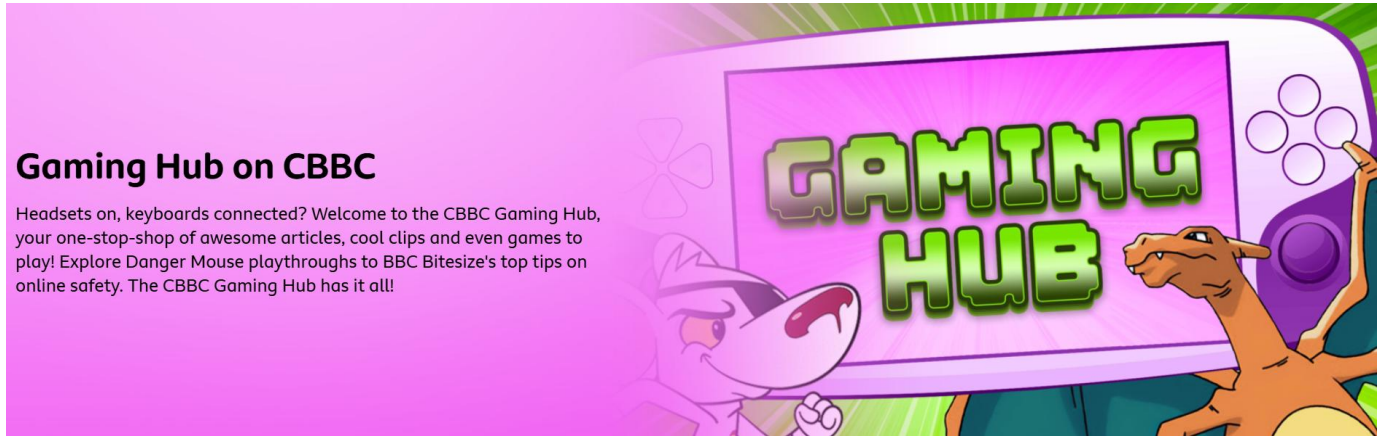
This heartwarming story of courage, friendship, and the bond between humans and animals is perfect for readers aged 8+ and beautifully illustrated by Levi Pinfold.



Online Safety

Check out the Gaming Hub on the CBBC website for a range of games, activities and resources linked to your children's favourite TV shows. This is a safe and fun way for children to explore gaming while learning valuable tips about online safety.

https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/topics/gaming



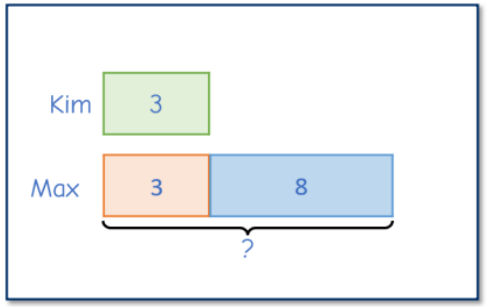
Maths Problem of the Week

KS1

1 Kim has 3 snowballs.

Max has 8 more snowballs than Kim.

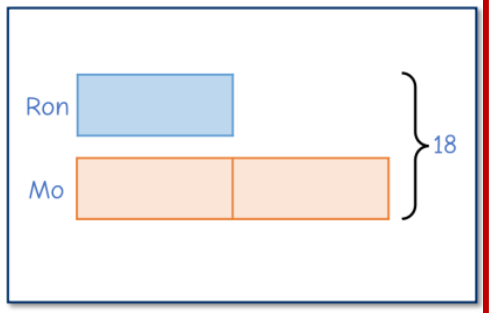
How many snowballs does Max have?



2 Mo has twice as many marbles as Ron.

They have 18 marbles in total.

How many marbles does Mo have?

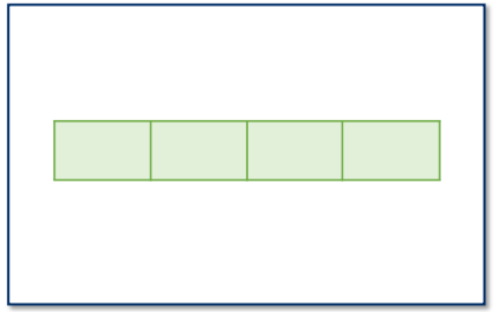


KS2

3 The price of a sledge is reduced by $\frac{1}{4}$

The new cost of the sledge is £45

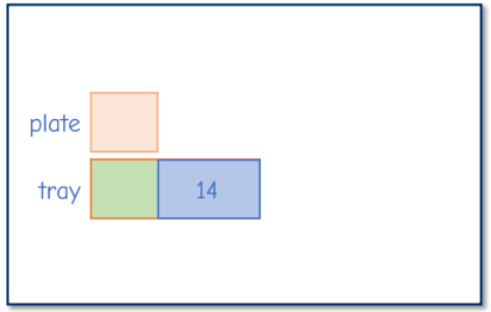
What was the original cost of the sledge?



4 A tray holds 14 more cookies than a plate.

Five plates and two trays hold 112 cookies.

How many cookies does a tray hold?



Challenge

5 A clothing donations box contains mittens, hats and scarves.

- $\frac{1}{9}$ of the clothes are mittens.
- 50% of the clothes are hats.
- There are 55 more scarves than mittens.

Some more mittens are donated.

Now $\frac{1}{3}$ of the clothes are mittens.

How many mittens were donated?

Answers

1 Max has 11 snowballs.

2 Mo has 12 marbles.

3 The original cost of the sledge was £60

4 A tray holds 26 cookies.

5 66 mittens were added.

Community Events

Raffle Tickets
Raffle tickets will be available to purchase at the office from Monday 24th November until Thursday 11th December. There will be a stall during the Christmas Fair to purchase tickets too. We have an exciting range of prizes to be won! Prices are £1 a ticket or £5 for a strip of tickets.

Guess the Santa!
From Thursday 27th November, there will be a game available to purchase from the office for £1 per child. School staff will be disguised as Santa and children will guess which teacher is behind the beard and hat! Children should bring their completed game to Mrs Garner's stall at the Christmas Fair to be checked and claim their prize.

How You Can Help
- Volunteer: We are looking for support to help run stalls on the day. If you can help, please let us know. Your children are welcome to join you on the stall.
- Donations: Please continue to donate pre-loved toys and books.
- Cakes: We would appreciate donations of cakes, brought to the office on Thursday 4th December, clearly labelled with ingredients.

Important Information
- Payments: Please note that we are unable to accept card payments, so cash only will be accepted. St Gabriel's stalls will range mostly from 50p-£5. Some of our external stall holders may be able to accept card payments, including the Scholastic Book Fair.
- Tokens: Pre-bought tokens from previous events can still be used, but no new tokens will be sold on the day.

Autumn Term 2: Key Dates

Thursday 27th November: Wreath Making Workshop
Proceeds from the event will contribute towards providing further enrichment opportunities for the children.

Friday 28th November: Tagore Celebration Worship

Thursday 4th December: Christmas Fair
Please join us at our Christmas Fair, between 3.30 and 6pm. If you are able to support with running a stall, please get in touch.

Friday 5th December: Braille Celebration Worship

Wednesday 10th December: Christmas Jumper Day and Christmas Dinner Day
If your child would like a Christmas dinner on Wednesday 10th December, this must be booked through your Arbor App by 12pm on Monday 24th November.

Friday 12th December: Attenborough Celebration Worship

Tuesday 16th December: Nursery and Reception Nativity

Wednesday 17th December: KS1 Nativity

Family Support

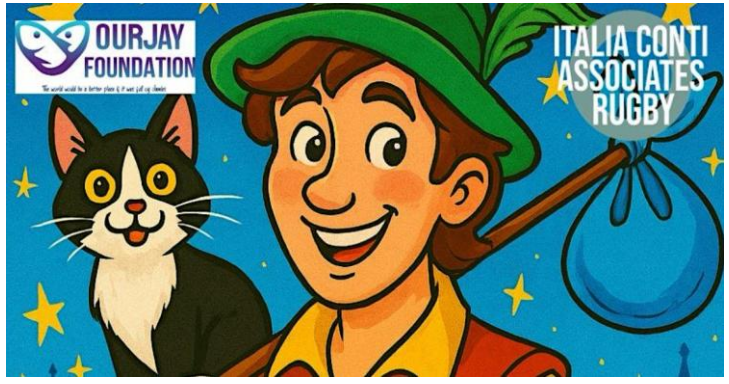
This week's Family Information Service newsletter includes information about:
•Electrical fire safety tips
•November's edition of the SEND newsletter
•Home to School Transport consultation

and much more!

Local Events

Join the talented young performers of Italia Conti Rugby, your local theatre school, as they bring to life this classic pantomime!

Italia Conti Rugby present: Dick Whittington Tickets, Sat, Dec 6, 2025 at 3:30 PM | Eventbrite



Whole School Attendance	
Attendance since September	95.9%
This week's attendance	96.2%
Latest Local Authority ranking	70th of 196 schools
Latest National ranking	Top 20-30% of schools

Advent Attendance Award

Weekly Draws: Each week during December, one child from each class who has attended school every day that week will be entered into a draw to win a book of their choice.

Grand Draw: Children who achieve full attendance for the whole of December will be entered into a special draw for another chance to win a free book.

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?

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.

Road Safety

If you're parking near the school during drop-off or pick-up times, please park considerately to maintain good visibility for other drivers and pedestrians. Thank you for helping to keep our community safe on the journey to and from school.

Fundraising Efforts

We are happy to announce that a fantastic £208.50 has been donated to the Shoe Box appeal, as well as 43 shoe boxes. Thank you!

From our non-uniform day last Friday, we have donated a grand total of £427 to Zoe's Place. Thank you for your donations.

ZOE'S PLACE
BABY HOSPICE

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

✉office@stgabrielscofeacademy.org ☎01788 222405