Weekly Learning Update

28th November 2025

Nursery

We have had another busy week within Nursery! With only a few weeks left until our Early Years Nativity, which is on Tuesday 16th December, the chilldren are in full rehearsal mode and cannot wait to share their hard work with you all!

With a continued focus on touch counting in this week's Maths, the children have engaged in a range of activities to support this. There has been a focus on a systematic approach to counting objects. First, we line then up, so all objects can be seen clearly. Then, we begin counting one at a time, only counting the object when it has been touched. There have been a range of games that have been played to support this, which the children have really enjoyed.

Within our Phonics sessions, we have been exploring creating a range of sounds and comparing these. There has been a focus on the differentiation on the volume, speed and the type of sound being produced.

Within our classroom, the children have enjoyed accessing a range of new learning opportunities. They have explored touch counting by placing 'candles' on birthday cakes. They have focused on mark making in sand and even represented letters by writing on different materials- including the actual table! We have had to use our fine motor control to be able to use tweezers, to save trapped animals from a masking tape 'spider web'. The children have also enjoyed the creative area, honing their cutting skills and creating their own fruit bowls, with a focus on different fruits that are seen within the key text, 'Each, Peach, Pear, Plum.'

We hope you all have a well and restful weekend and we look forward to having everyone back next week.

Reception (King Class and Parks Class)

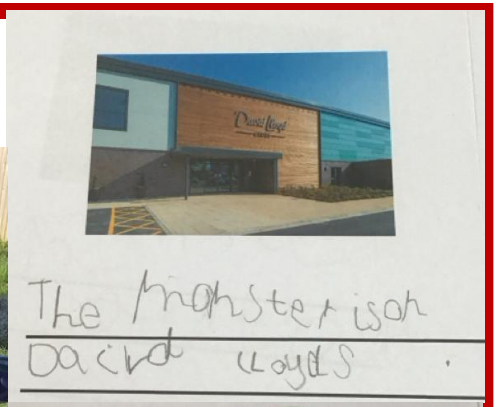
We've had another super week in Reception!

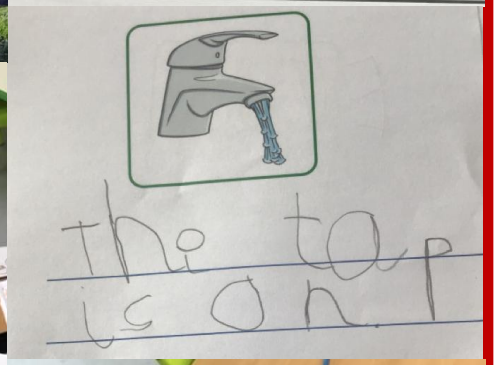
This week, in Phonics, the children have learnt the phonemes ch, sh, th and ng. They have been practising how to blend these sounds to read words and segment them to support their spelling.

In English, the children have been busy adapting their own versions of "We're Going on a Bear Hunt." Their imagination has been incredible and we've been so impressed by how well they can remember and retell the changes they made to the story! They have also been focusing on writing simple sentences using capital letters, finger spaces and full stops.

In Maths, this week, the children have been learning to order numbers to 20. They have had lots of fun ordering numbers in different ways and have especially loved ordering the numbers along the washing line in the classroom.

In Expressive Arts, the children added the final touches to their Christmas crackers with some festive glitter. They worked so delicately and the results are wonderfully sparkly!

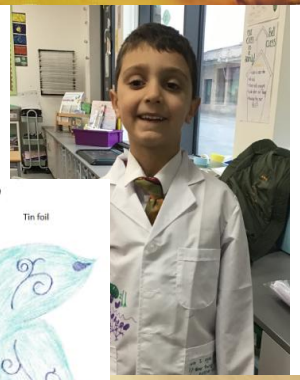




Year 1 (Bell Class and Windsor Class)

This week, the children have demonstrated perseverance and embraced our school value of growth by completing their Autumn Term assessments in Reading and Maths. We are incredibly proud of their hard work and the fantastic progress they have already made this term.

In Maths, we have been learning about 2D and 3D shapes. The children have used accurate mathematical language to describe their properties and sorted shapes according to different criteria. They investigated which 3D shapes roll, which can stack, and which can do both. Working in pairs, they showed excellent reasoning skills when explaining their ideas.



Our science learning continued with classifying animals. This week, the children labelled the body parts of animals from different groups, including mammals, reptiles, birds, amphibians and fish. We began to explore how these body parts help animals move, eat and survive in their habitats.

In History, we compared Victorian homes with homes today. The children discussed similarities and differences between objects found in Victorian homes and those we use now. They sorted images to show their understanding and discovered that some inventions from Victorian times, such as telephones and flushing toilets, are still used today.

The children created beautiful butterfly designs in preparation for making sculptures next week using tin foil. They carefully showed symmetry and labelled the materials they would need. Their work was inspired by the sculptor David Gosling.

In RE, we explored how Hindu people worship in a mandir. The children drew examples of Hindu worship on a mandir template and considered how different senses are involved in worship. They showed great respect for different worldviews and were curious about Hindu practices.

We began our new English unit based on a video clip called 'Bubbles', which tells the story of a little girl who finds a pot of bubble mixture. The children thought of questions they would like to ask the girl and practised using question words and question marks to structure their sentences.

Thank you for your continued support. We are excited to see the children build on this learning next week!

Year 2 (Braille Class and Kerr Class)

Year 2 have had a very productive week and we are very proud of the efforts the children have put into their Autumn term assessments in Reading and Maths.

This week we moved onto subtraction of two-digit numbers in Maths. We used Base 10 to support our understanding of what happens when you subtract a two-digit number from another number, with a special focus on making an exchange of 1 ten into 10 ones.

In History, we travelled back in time to 1666 and learnt all about what life was like back then. We found out that in London at the time it was very unhygienic because people did not have running water and so they emptied their toilet waste into the streets or the rivers. People also had very different clothing and objects compared to what we use today. The class' enjoyed creating their time traveller passport and finding lots of information all about the Stuart Life.

In Science, we continued to explore habitats with a focus on the Savannah this week. We discovered what it was like to live in such a hot place and found out about animals who are adapted to living there.

In D&T, we had a go at sewing! This was to help us when we make our puppets later in the term. We explored how to thread a needle and then tried to work out for ourselves how to do a running stitch. It was very hard work and we had to use lots of problem solving skills to be able to work out how to fix problems we encountered.

Year 3 (Malala Class and Anning Class)

This week, the children have shown incredible growth when completing their first assessments of Year 3 and we are so proud of the determination and resilience they have shown. They have all tried their very best and worked so hard to apply and showcase all of their learning from this term.

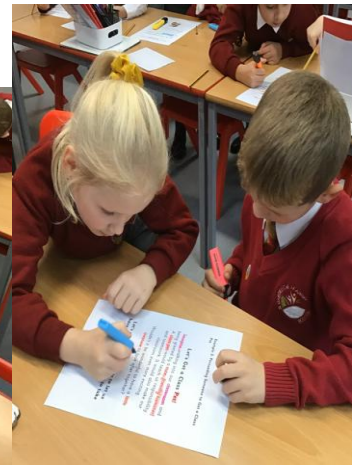
In English, we have been focusing on the features of persuasive writing. The children looked at lots of different examples to try and recognise the features and think about their purpose.

In Maths, we have been subtracting 3-digit numbers involving an exchange in the hundreds. The children are now experts at following the steps to find their answers!

In Science, we learnt about the human skeleton. We discussed the purpose of our skeleton and the functions of the main parts of the body, before constructing our own skeletons and labelling the main bones.

In Geography we have been planning our fieldwork ready for next week to find out more about the human and physical features in Houlton. We thought about what we wanted to find out and how we could carry this out, record and then present our findings. We will be answering the questions 'how many people use the park in the afternoon?' and 'how many people visit the Co-op at lunchtime?' by visiting these places and recording our results.

This week, we also made our Christmas decorations ready to sell at the Christmas fair next week and they look amazing! They will be on sale for £1 each. We hope to see you there!



Year 4 (Tagore Class and Turing Class)

Much like many of the classes through school, we have been tackling our assessments with tremendous growth and a terrific attitude! This has allowed us all to showcase the great progress we have made since September. Well done to you all on putting in such a tremendous effort!

Both classes have been hard at work painting and preparing our Christmas decorations for the upcoming fair and we can't wait for everyone to see all of our wonderful decorations on the stalls! Come by next Thursday and pick one up!

During our PSHE learning this week, we focussed on how social media can affect a person's mental health. We learned that not all information that is on the internet is not necessarily true, as some things can be altered or edited. We learned how to identify signs of edited media and information and what people can do when they notice it.

RE this week saw us learning about how different members of the Sikh organised worldview worship and what they believe about God. We asked a lot of questions and made lots of important notes - all to help develop our understanding of the different worldviews that are present around us.

Year 5 (Attenborough Class and Rauf Class)

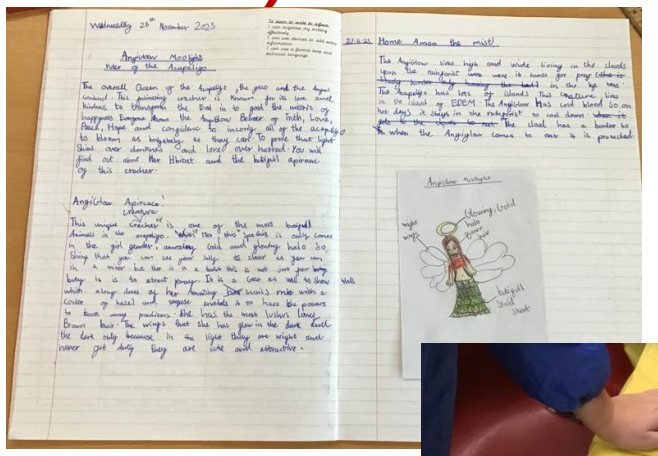
This week has been assessment week and the children have worked incredibly hard to recall what they have learned throughout the term and apply their knowledge. We are very proud of their determination and effort.

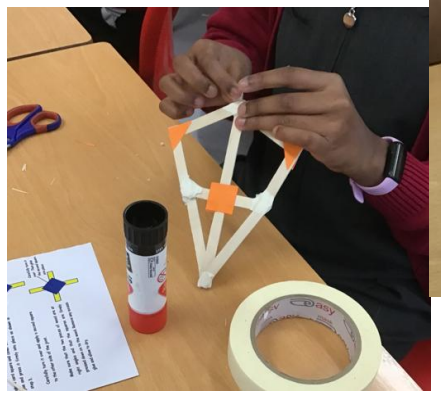
In English, we thoroughly enjoyed writing our own sections for 'The Bestiary' inspired by Impossible Creatures. Using the plans created last week, the children focused on writing to inform, ensuring they included expanded noun phrases, relative clauses and parentheses. The work produced was fantastic and a wonderful way to conclude such a successful writing unit.

In RE, our focus was on morals from a Humanist worldview. The children explored different scenarios and discussed how people with varying worldviews might respond. This led to thoughtful conversations and a deeper understanding of moral reasoning.

In DT, in preparation for making our bird hides next week, we experimented with different types of joins. Using lollipop sticks, the children created L-joints and T-joints, then evaluated which would be the strongest and most effective. This hands-on activity encouraged problem-solving and creativity.

We have also continued decorating our Christmas tree ornaments for the upcoming fair. The children have painted them with great care and they look absolutely beautiful!





Year 6 (Pogson Class and Walker Class)

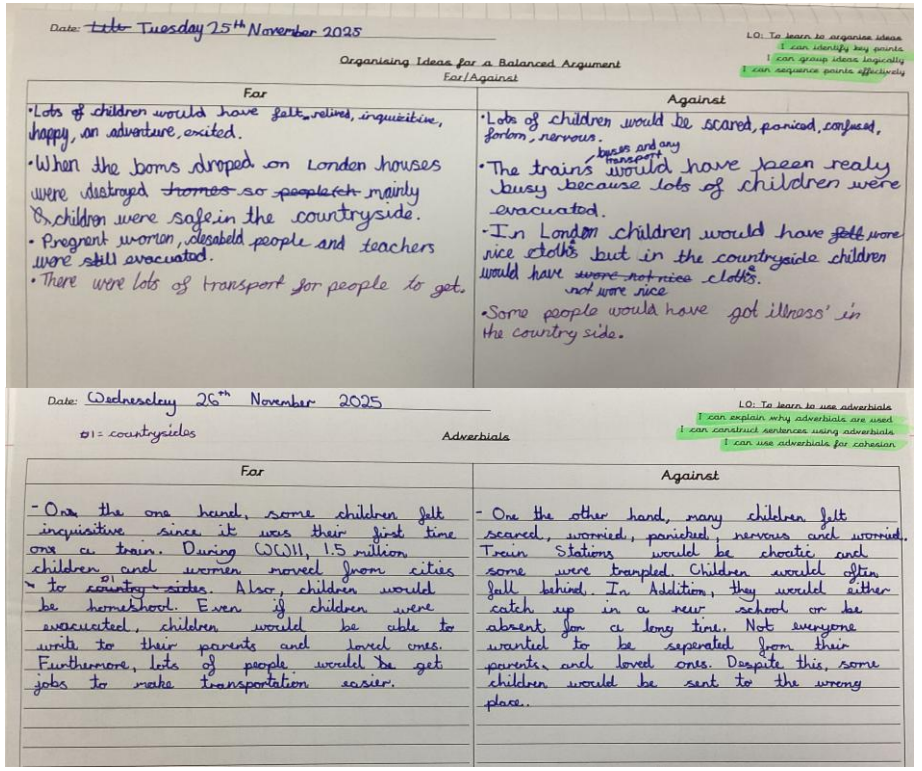
This week the children have been working incredibly hard during their assessments. We are so proud of the growth , hard work and resilience the children have shown!

In English, we have been exploring balanced arguments: their purpose, features and audience. We have organised our facts and knowledge about evacuation into arguments for and against it. It is really important that we have the same amount of arguments for and against in a balanced argument, so that we don't influence the reader and allow them to make their own decision on the topic being discussed. Yesterday, we wrote out some of our arguments using adverbials for cohesion to direct the reader to whether the statement is for or against.

In History, we have been learning about the consequences of food shortages during World War II. Rationing was introduced to ensure everyone got the same amount of food and avoid starvation. We have analysed a range of primary sources, including the government poster 'Dig For Victory', which was used to encourage people to grow their own fruits and vegetables. We also got to see what the rationing books would have looked like, by studying a replica that was made.

In Science, we have built on our knowledge from last week about reflection. We made periscopes to learn about how mirrors use reflection to allow us to see things. The angles of the mirrors allowed us to see around corners.

We have also been getting in the festive spirit by making reindeer decorations to sell at the Christmas Fair next week. We are excited to sell them and raise some money for school!



Date: ~~tbc~~ Tuesday 25th November 2025

Organising Ideas for a Balanced Argument

For/Against

LO: To learn to organise ideas
I can identify key points
I can group ideas logically
I can sequence points effectively

For	Against
• Lots of children would have felt relived, inquisitive, happy, an adventure, excited.	• Lots of children would be scared, panicked, confused, forlorn, nervous.
• When the bombs dropped on London houses were destroyed ~~homes~~ so ~~people~~ ~~left~~ mainly children were safe in the countryside.	• The trains (buses and any transport) would have been really busy because lots of children were evacuated.
• Pregnant women, disabled people and teachers were still evacuated.	• In London children would have ~~felt~~ wore nice cloths but in the countryside children would have ~~wore not nice cloths~~ not wore nice.
• There were lots of transport for people to get.	• Some people would have got illness' in the country side.

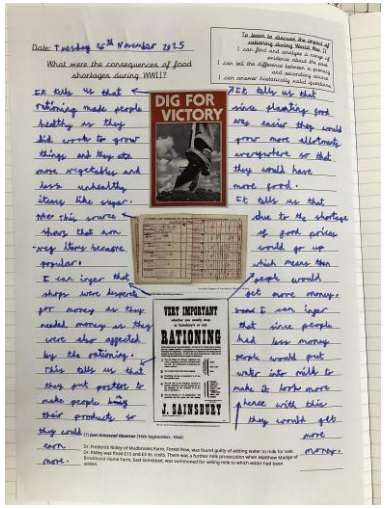
Date: Wednesday 26th November 2025

LO: To learn to use adverbials
I can explain why adverbials are used
I can construct sentences using adverbials
I can use adverbials for cohesion

01 = countrysides

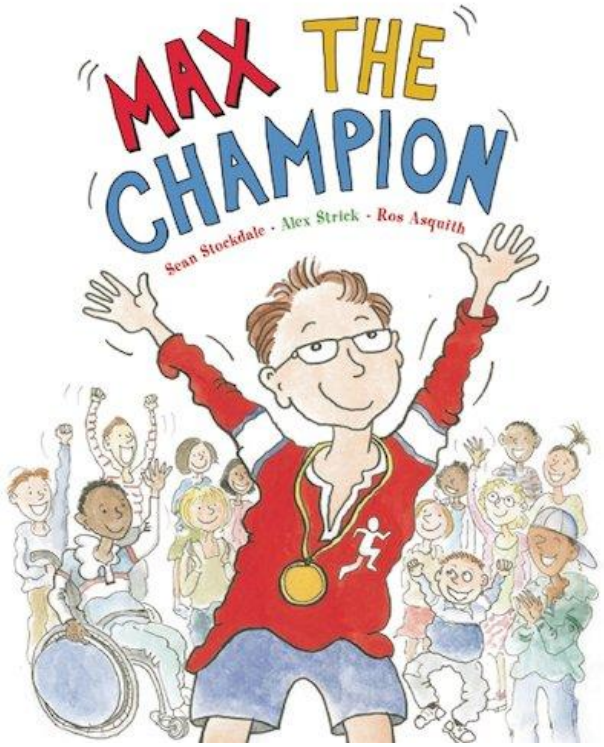
Adverbials

For	Against
- One the one hand, some children felt inquisitive since it was their first time one a train. During WWII, 1.5 million children and women moved from cities to ~~country sides~~ countrysides. Also, children would be homesick. Even if children were evacuated, children would be able to write to their parents and loved ones. Furthermore, lots of people would be get jobs to make transportation easier.	- One the other hand, many children felt scared, worried, panicked, nervous and worried. Train Stations would be chaotic and some were trampled. Children would often fall behind. In Addition, they would either catch up in a new school or be absent for a long time. Not everyone wanted to be seperated from their parents and loved ones. Despite this, some children would be sent to the wrong place.



Collective Worship

During Worship Through Story this week, the children enjoyed Max the Champion, a wonderful book that celebrates diversity and inclusion. It highlights how everyone can be a champion in their own way, regardless of differences.



The children continued singing Believe during Worship Through Song this week. The themes covered in the song (trusting in your potential, dreaming big and persevering) mirrored those discussed in Max the Champion.

This week's Celebration Collective Worship was led by Tagore Class. They shared their learning from the last few weeks from across the curriculum. We heard a fantastic song that helps us with our times tables, information about different states of matter and some brilliantly written instructions. Well done, Tagore Class!

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

Advent Calendar of Reading

To celebrate the build up to Christmas, we're encouraging everyone to read a little more during December!

See how many of these reading activities you can complete this advent. We'd love to hear about them!

Advent Calendar of Reading 2025

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1 Ask a friend, someone in your family, or your teacher what their favourite Christmas story is!	2 Add a book to your list to Father Christmas. Which book will it be?	3 Read and learn about how other cultures celebrate Christmas.	4 Design a bookmark to give to a friend or family member	5 Sing a Christmas song before you read	6 Have a whole family bedtime story	7 Drink a hot chocolate while reading - no spillages!
8 Read a book about winter animals	9 Recommend a Christmassy book to a friend	10 Write a short poem about something you love doing at Christmas	11 Draw your favourite book character in a Christmas jumper!	12 Read or learn about the nativity story	13 Make a cosy den and read in it!	14 Read in your pyjamas
15 Write a review about something you've been reading this month	16 Read a Christmas book that has been made into a film	17 Read a book with a red or green cover	18 Colour a Christmassy picture while listening to an audio book	19 Read the funniest Christmas joke you know to a friend	20 Read a Christmas book that one of your parents or carers loved as a child	21 Design a bookmark for Father Christmas
22 Read to your pet or a cuddly toy	23 Read a story by your Christmas tree	24 - Christmas Eve Read the Night Before Christmas	25 - Christmas Day Season's Readings! Hopefully you found a book in your stocking to enjoy!			

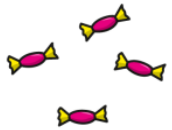
To celebrate the build up to Christmas, we're encouraging everyone to read a little more during December!
See how many of these reading activities you can complete this advent.

The Illustrated LIBRARY

Maths Problem of the Week

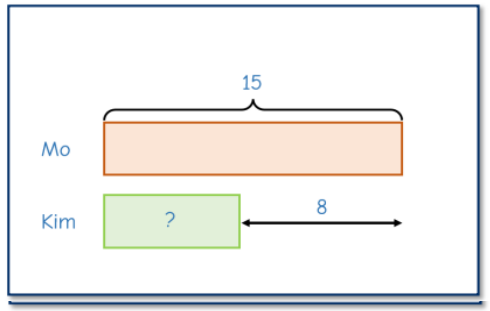
KS1

1 Mo has 15 sweets.



Mo has 8 more sweets than Kim.

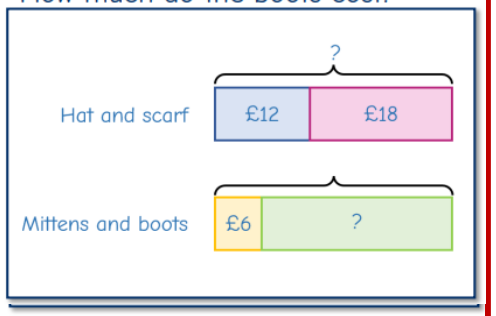
How many sweets does Kim have?



2

The total cost of the hat and the scarf is the same as the total cost of the mittens and the boots.

How much do the boots cost?



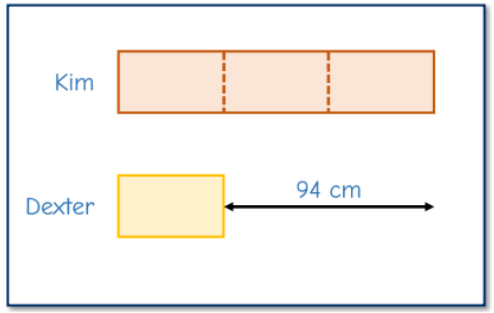
KS2

3 Kim and Dexter each build a snowman.

Kim's snowman is 3 times taller than Dexter's snowman.

Dexter's snowman is 94 cm shorter than Kim's snowman.

How tall is Kim's snowman?



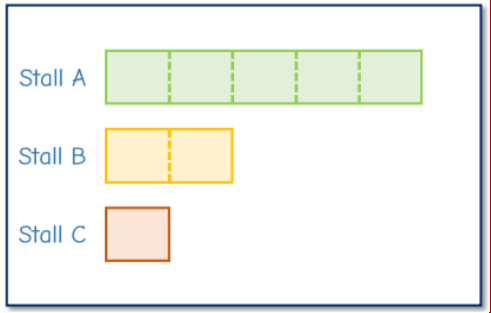
4 Three stalls at a market are selling decorations.

Stall B has $\frac{2}{5}$ the number of decorations that Stall A has.

Stall B has double the number of decorations that Stall C has.

Stall A has 135 more decorations than Stall B.

How many decorations do the stalls have altogether?



Challenge

5 A factory makes gold baubles, silver baubles and red baubles.

- $\frac{8}{11}$ of the baubles the factory makes are gold.
- $\frac{2}{9}$ of the remaining baubles are silver.

The factory makes 3,250 gold and silver baubles.

How many red baubles does the factory make?

Answers

1 Kim has 7 sweets.

2 The boots cost £24

3 Kim's snowman is 141 cm tall.

4 The three stalls have a total of 360 decorations.

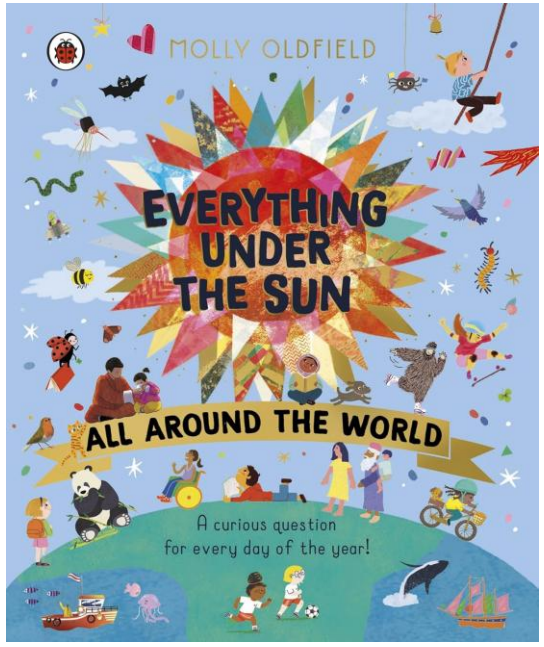
5 The factory makes 875 red baubles.

Recommended Read

Everything Under the Sun: All Around the World by Molly Oldfield is a beautifully presented, fact-filled book that takes readers on a fascinating journey across the globe. Packed with intriguing questions and surprising answers, it explores a wide range of topics including geography, cultures, traditions, natural wonders, and curious global facts. From why some countries drive on the left to how people celebrate festivals, the book satisfies children's natural curiosity about the world we live in.

Written in an engaging, clear style and complemented by colourful, detailed illustrations, this book makes complex ideas accessible and exciting for young readers. It encourages exploration, discussion, and independent thinking, making it perfect for classroom use or home reading.

Highly recommended for curious minds, *Everything Under the Sun: All Around the World* is an excellent resource for children who love to ask "why?" and "how?". It supports learning in geography and global awareness while making discovery fun and memorable.



Online Safety

The BBC have a website and app called **Own It**. The website has a lot of content for children to help them navigate their online lives, and the free smartphone app comes with a special keyboard which can intervene with help and support in the moments that children need it the most.

How to stay safe when setting up gaming profiles

An animated video looking at setting up a personal profile for an online game.

Online safety • Ages 7-11

5 things you can do to make the internet a better place

A short article with teacher notes – listing five ways that you can help to make the internet a safer and better place for everyone.

Online safety • Ages 7-11

Celebrity tips on handling online hate

Celebrities such as Greg James, Maya Jama, Stacey Dooley, Kimberley Wyatt and Joe Sugg give tips and advice on how to handle bullying and hate online.

Online safety • Ages 7-11

Quiz: Is what you're posting online mean?

What we post online can sometimes be accidentally unkind. Find out whether your posts are getting others down.

Digital literacy • Ages 7-11

Digital footprint: what is it and why should you care?

An explanation video of what a digital footprint is and how it is created.

Online safety • Ages 7-11

BBC OWN IT

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 (as well as pre-bought tokens from previous events). 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.

We do require children, including Years 5 and 6 who have permission to walk, to be supervised by a parent or carer at the Christmas Fair. The fair will be busy and having a parent/carer present ensures children stay safe, supported and able to enjoy all the festive activities responsibly.

Autumn Term 2: Key Dates

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

Monday 8th December: Houlton School Pantomime
Students of Houlton School are Performing a touring production of Sleeping Beauty at St Gabriel's.

Wednesday 10th December: Christmas Jumper Day and Christmas Dinner Day
Christmas Jumper Day is an annual fundraising event organised by Save the Children, encouraging people to wear festive jumpers and make a donation to support the charity. Please make your donation on Arbor.

Friday 12th December: Attenborough Celebration Worship and Nursery Christmas Craft Sessions
We are welcoming Nursery parents and carers either between 10.30-11.15am or 2.45-3.30pm for some Christmas crafts. Please complete the sign up sheets on the Nursery doors. Due to limited space within the Nursery, we ask that 1 parent/carer attends and no siblings, unless they are a baby in arms.

Tuesday 16th December: Nursery and Reception Nativity

Wednesday 17th December: KS1 Nativity

Family Support

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

•Cost of living support
•Carers Rights Day
•Communication workshop

and much more!

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.

Whole School Attendance	
Attendance since September	96%
This week's attendance	94.6%
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?

Smart Watches

Please be reminded that smart watches that can connect to the internet and/or have a camera function are not permitted at school.

If children in Year 5 and Year 6 wear a smart watch for independent travel, the watch must be switched off upon arrival and handed to their class teacher for safekeeping during the school day.

Angels' Bookings

To help us keep things running smoothly at the end of the school day, we kindly ask that any changes to collection arrangements are communicated to the school office as early as possible. Ideally, please avoid calling after 3:15 pm, as this is our busiest time and makes it harder to ensure messages reach teachers promptly.

There has been an increase in last-minute Angel's bookings. While we understand that plans can change, we'd appreciate as much notice as possible so we can make sure staffing and arrangements are in place.

Thank you for your support in helping us keep things organised and safe for all children.

Fundraising Efforts

We are happy to announce that we raised £200 from our Wreath Making Workshop!

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

✉office@stgabrielscofeacademy.org ☎01788 222405