



5 December 2025

Headteacher's Message

Dear Parents and Carers,

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas! It has been a magical start to December, with the children taking time on Decoration Day to ensure Summercroft is looking and feeling festive. The Christmas trees in the halls have been decorated with all the wonderful crafts made by the children. The displays in the KS1 hall have been made by the Year 1 and 2 children ahead of their performance and they look fabulous. There was a real buzz around the school which I know was enjoyed by all. Our Early Years and KS1 children have also collaborated to make sure the lights on their tree worked again this year. After initially not working when they were turned on, the children closed their eyes, held hands and wished together and eventually their wishes came true. The tree was lit and the naughty angel was found so she can take pride of place on the top. It is always a heartwarming assembly and Mrs Bugg loves making it a very special occasion for all.



The children are immersed in their current topics and it was lovely to see lots of trips over the past couple of weeks as well. Our Year 3 children have been to the library and Year 4 have been on the Bishop's Stortford town trail, while Year 5 have welcomed parents in to share their final outcomes from their World War 2 topic. There is still lots of learning to come over the next couple of weeks to ensure the children complete their topics before the Christmas holidays.

We received a lovely letter from The Royal British Legion to thank the Summercroft community for our contributions to the Remembrance Day Service at the memorial in town, with our Year 5 children sharing their poetry, and for the generosity that was shown by everyone who bought their poppies in school. We raised over £700 which is a great amount to support the charity. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

Last Thursday we said goodbye to Mrs Cox, who has left Summercroft after 17 years. Mrs Cox developed the speech and language support across the school, as well as EAL support, which many children have benefitted from over the years. We were able to celebrate her time at Summercroft with a whole-school assembly where we could thank her for all she has done, in her role in school but also as Chair of the PTA a number of years ago. I am sure you will join me in wishing her the best of luck for the future and we will be recruiting for the vacancy in the near future. Joy Wheeler, speech and language therapist, will continue to assess and support children in the interim period.

Ensuring good attendance for all pupils continues to be a priority and regular, punctual attendance is vital to your child's learning and wellbeing. We greatly appreciate your support in helping them start each day ready to learn. Even a small number of missed days can have a significant impact on progress, friendships, and confidence. Please remember that family holidays during term time cannot be authorised, and absences without an agreed reason may result in a penalty notice being issued by the local authority. For further information please see the [Herts County Council website](#). If you are experiencing any difficulties with attendance, do get in touch as we are here to help and work together to ensure every child enjoys a successful school experience. Jo Willis, our pastoral lead, will be happy to meet and discuss any barriers to attendance. We continue to aim for at least 96% attendance across the school and you can see your child's current attendance using the Arbor App. Individual letters to parents of children who have fallen below our 95% threshold will be sent in the coming weeks with further information, support and advice.

Looking ahead, we have lots to look forward to over the final two weeks. Our EYFS and KS1 children are putting the final touches to their Christmas performances and they sound fantastic already! Year 2 - Year 6 children are practising for the Carol Concert at All Saints Church on Monday 15th December at 2pm which is always a special occasion, and it would be lovely to see lots of you there to share in the celebration. Further details and timings for each event can be found on the [school diary](#).



Kind regards,
Stephen Jess
Headteacher



EYFS

Habitats All Around The World!

In Early Years, the children have continued to learn about the different habitats around the world. We read the story *Handa's Surprise*, by Eileen Browne, and looked more closely at Africa and the animals which live there. The children discussed how Africa was a hot country and spoke about the similarities and differences between Africa and the UK. We then moved onto learning about animals in the polar regions and spoke about what it would be like to live there and how the areas were extremely cold!

In Reception, the children have been exploring colour mixing, mixing hot colours to create African sunsets and a lion's mane. They then mixed cold colours to create an arctic background. The children also drew their favourite polar animal and using their learnt phonics they labelled their picture.

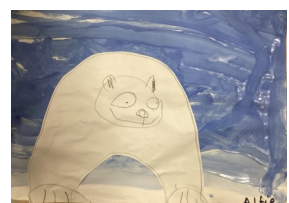
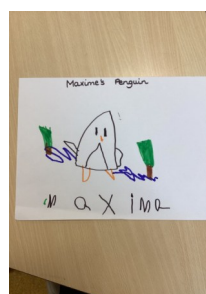
In maths, the children created shape penguins using 2d shapes. They have also been looking at numbers up to 5 and the composition of that numeral. The children found different ways to make quantities to five and they have also been busy looking at 'one more' and 'one less.'

In Nursery, the children also explored colour mixing as they added white to blue whilst creating a polar scene, before stencilling on a polar animal. The children also painted their own penguin – thinking about if they needed to use a thick brush or a thin brush as they painted the different features.

The children enjoyed different drawing challenges as they drew an elephant and a penguin, selecting the correct colours and thinking about whether they needed to draw a straight line or a curved line to create their masterpiece. They also developed their cutting skills as they cut stripes or spots to add to a different African animal.

In maths, the children in Nursery have been looking at numbers to four and have been counting out the correct number of objects needed to match a particular numeral.

There has been a real buzz across Early Years as the children have been very busy learning all the different songs ready for our EYFS performance of *The Twinkly Nativity*. The children cannot wait to perform it to you on Friday 12th December at 2pm.





Year 1

That's Not Fair!

The children were intrigued this week to spot a new sign on our visual timetable. After some enthusiastic debate, they discovered it signalled our very first history lesson! The children listened to the life-story of Josephine Baker and explored the concept of segregation. To help them understand the unfairness of segregation, some children listened to the story from the comfort of a chair with a drink, while others listened from the carpet with very little attention from the adults. Confusion and sense of unjustness were felt, but the children showed great resilience. Afterwards, Mrs Lamb and Miss Borg explained that this small experience reflected how segregation would have felt for Josephine. We then discussed fairness, inclusion, and how people in the past have helped bring about positive change. We were incredibly proud of the maturity the children demonstrated during their first history lesson.

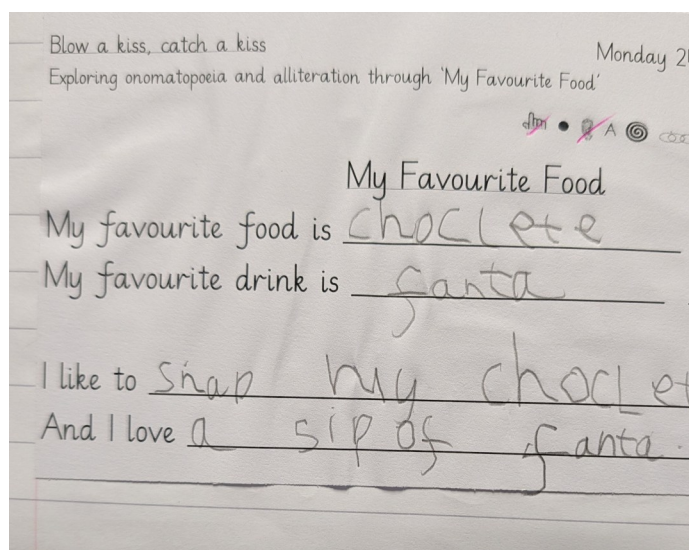
In maths, we have continued to work on number bonds within and up to 10. The children have been practising writing number sentences and exploring all the different ways two numbers can be added together. Using manipulatives, models and songs has helped build both confidence and fluency. The children discovered that by working methodically, they could find *all* the possible ways to make a number. Do ask them to show you at home!



Joseph Coelho's poetry collection, *Blow a Kiss, Catch a Kiss*, has been a wonderful source of inspiration for our writing this week. It was rather noisy in Year 1 as we explored words such

as *crunch*, *wobble*, *snap* and *slurp*, matching each sound to our favourite foods to create playful poems. We also read 'The City is Growing', thinking carefully about our own town and how it compares to a city. After listening to the sounds of London, we opened our windows to hear the sounds of Bishop's Stortford. The children then created their own poems and illustrations about Bishop's Stortford, showing wonderful imagination and creativity. We are very proud of their work!

After the excitement of Decoration Day, the festive spirit continues as we practise our songs for the Nativity. The children are doing a brilliant job learning the actions and singing with growing confidence. We are very much looking forward to performing for an audience soon.





Year 2

Abracadabra!

English lessons in Year 2 have recently taken on a magical twist!

The children became witches and wizards, creating imaginative potions filled with all sorts of delightfully creepy ingredients including maggots, cockroaches, spiders, and more. They then cast their own spells as they stirred the cauldron, letting their creativity swirl through the air. From this excitement, the class crafted spellbinding words and phrases that they later used to write their very own spell poems.

We have also been enjoying Design & Technology and after much anticipation, we finally began building our royal carriages. Through the design process, the children have explored both the mechanical workings of a vehicle, and the elegant appearance of a carriage. They have already constructed the main frame and painted and decorated their creations, and now we look forward to the final steps: attaching axles and wheels so they can move, and evaluating them!

Our art lessons this half term have been helping us with our drawing skills, and we have been concentrating on thoughtful mark making. The children practised their observational skills by drawing leaves and twigs, using continuous-line techniques and experimenting with pens instead of pencils to maintain focus. The outcomes were amazing!

We also enjoyed being creative on Decoration Day last week and many of us worked hard to create the nativity scene ready for our show. Rehearsals are going well, and the children have been amazing, learning their lines as well as the songs and the actions. We can't wait to show you!





Year 3

No 'Trolling' Around In Year 3!

Over the past two weeks, Year 3 have been busy stepping into the hooves of the Little Billy Goat Gruff as they wrote and rehearsed persuasive speeches to deliver to the troll. After watching examples of powerful persuasion, pupils planned, edited and practised their own speeches designed to convince the troll not to eat them - and to wait instead for their older, bigger, and far tastier brother!

Children learned how exaggeration, rhetorical questions and flattery can sway an argument, and they put all these new skills to excellent use. Rumours began to spread that an ugly troll had been spotted wandering around school... and before long, pupils finally met him at the bridge!

Their speeches were brilliantly persuasive, full of confidence and creativity - and some even succeeded in winning the troll over. Others... well, let's just say a few goats took an unexpected splash into the river!

Year 3 had a fantastic time discovering just how powerful their words can be, and we are incredibly proud of their enthusiasm, imagination and fearless performances.



A Tale of Two Countries

To end our geography unit on *France vs the UK*, Year 3 have been busy comparing the two countries in all sorts of fascinating ways - from currency and language to climate and physical features. Pupils were then set the challenge of creating pop-up landmark maps, showcasing key locations and famous structures from both nations.

Their creativity shone through as they designed detailed pop-ups of iconic landmarks and used their locational knowledge to place them accurately on their maps. The results were truly *magnifique*!



Having Fun Isn't Hard When You've Got a Library Card!

Year 3 enjoyed a wonderful trip to our local library, where many pupils had the chance to sign up for their very own library card and borrow a book to take home. The brilliant library staff shared a story with the children before leading them in fun activities such as a book hunt and finding titles using the Dewey Decimal system.

The children were thrilled to explore the huge range of books on offer - the only disappointment was being allowed to take just one home on the day! We encourage all families to continue enjoying the library regularly and to go on many more reading adventures together.

Return dates for books:

Maple Class: Sunday 14th December

Apple Class: Wednesday 17th December





Year 4

"The Greatest Scientists Are Artists As Well"

In science lessons, the children have been working scientifically to understand how to use a thermometer and a stopwatch accurately. They used the stopwatch to time in seconds how long their partner took to complete simple tasks such as writing their name five times. Accurate use of this equipment will enable the children to investigate this block's enquiry question – 'How does the temperature of water affect the time it takes for ice to melt?' Let's hope we don't have too many icy mornings ahead of us to test out our predictions!

On Decoration Day, we created an array of Christmassy creations including glittering tree decorations, sparkling snow scenes, beautiful bauble cards and a creative calendar featuring a tree in all four seasons. All of the teachers were impressed with how carefully the children listened to instructions and how wonderful their creations looked. We're sure they are already in pride of place in your homes.

In English lessons, we have continued to follow Anna Atkins' journey through life. To gain an insight into Anna's experience, the children were asked to create a high-quality observational drawing of a shell which, like Anna's, must be 'as perfectly lifelike as humanly possible'. They then reflected on the experience and what it taught them about Anna, to support their diary writing in role.

In art lessons, we have begun our unit on storytelling through drawing. First, the children experimented with different techniques using charcoal. Using the techniques they had practised, the children then chose a line from the poem, 'My Menagerie' by Tom Wilde, to illustrate. The results were impressive!

We were also lucky to spend an afternoon practising our French with students from Hockerill. They had organised some fun activities and games to help us learn the names of shops in French and practise the numbers up to 40.

**Birthday List**

Happy Birthday to the following children who have celebrated their birthdays recently.

Evie W
Grai L
Sophie W
Evie T
Matthias M

Oak
Beech
Hazel
Willow
N-Acorn

Diana A
Isaac T
Lucas MDJ
Juliet S
Daniel F

N-Acorn
Cherry
Sycamore
Elm
Sycamore

Lennon E
Emmet M
Ethan L
Maya M

Cherry
Holly
Lime
Hazel



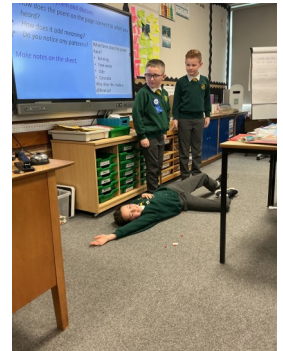


Year 5

Empathy-Driven Introduction To Our New Unit

We have begun our new English unit this week, centred around the beautiful text, *I Talk Like a River*, written by Jordan Scott and illustrated by Sydney Smith. To launch the unit, the children were introduced to the narrator, whose neurodiversity offers a powerful and unique narrative perspective.

To help develop empathy and deepen their understanding, Sycamore and Hazel explored a selection of poems by Laura Mucha and Liz Brownlee. After discussing and inferring the meaning of each poem, the children chose one to rehearse and perform for the class. Their performances were thoughtful, expressive, and thoroughly enjoyable to watch.

**Out From the Trenches and Into the Indus Valley**

We recently concluded our World War One topic with an informative and engaging parent presentation. The children worked incredibly hard to design and organise their expert displays, and their poems provided a moving end to such an important learning journey. On behalf of the whole Year 5 team, thank you for your continued support.

Our new topic now takes us back nearly 5,000 years to the Ancient Indus Valley Civilisation. To launch the unit, the children examined a range of Indus seals and inferred potential meanings behind the symbols. They then created their own versions using clay and etching tools. Be sure to ask your child what the seals were used for and whether they remember any interesting facts about the Indus Valley language!





Year 6

Talking, Thinking And Tinsell!

Year 6 have had a thoughtful and engaging end to our topic on colonialism, culminating in an exploration of the question: Should Rhodes Avenue be renamed?

We first spent an afternoon bringing together all of the arguments we had studied. The children impressed us with their nuanced understanding of this complex issue, carefully considering points both for and against the renaming. As part of this work, we also discussed the important distinction between remembering history and commemorating it.

To finish the topic, we held our first formal class debate. Before debating ourselves, we watched an example debate and identified its key features as a form of presentational talk, contrasting it with the exploratory talk we often use in the classroom. We then nominated speakers from within the class, while the rest of the children took on the role of Talk Detectives, evaluating the speakers using the four strands of the Oracy Framework.

The children rose brilliantly to the challenge: their arguments were thoughtful and passionately delivered. Our Talk Detectives provided insightful feedback, showing excellent listening and evaluative skills. After the debate, we held a vote which, by a narrow margin, came out in favour of renaming Rhodes Avenue!

Alongside all this serious thinking, we have also been getting into the Christmas spirit. Year 6 have been rehearsing for our upcoming carol concert at St Michael's Church on Monday 8th December; their singing is sounding beautiful!

They also took part in Decoration Day, rotating around the four UKS2 classes to complete a range of festive crafts. Both children and staff had a fantastic day, and the results were beautiful!

We now look ahead to a busy and exciting final few weeks of term, including the launch of our next topic: *Biomes*.





SEND Updates

We would like to make you aware of some of the local support available for parents of children with SEND.

You can find lots of articles to support children's wellbeing and emotional health [here](#).



Please access the Developing Special Provision Locally, Area 3 (DSPL3) website and Facebook page linked below. There you will find a range of helpful information, advice, courses and further SEN support.

DSPL3 Website- [Developing Special Provision Locally \(DSPL\) 3 - Home](#)

DSPL3 Facebook page- [Delivering Special Provision Locally Area 3 - East Herts | Facebook](#)

There are also a range of other support groups, including:

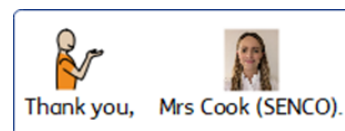
[SPACE Hertfordshire – Supporting families in Hertfordshire | Autism | ADHD | Neurodiversity](#)

[ADD-vance](#)- The ADHD and Autism Trust- courses include 'Understanding my ADHD'.

[Families in Focus | Courses for Parents, Hertfordshire](#)

[Families Feeling Safe](#) • Protective Behaviours training, courses and workshops.

SENDIASS- [Home](#)- Info, advice and support with the SEN systems.



New SEN Signposts:

- 'Understanding My Autism' & 'Understanding My ADHD' courses for children starting in January 2026- see attached flyer.
- Neurodiversity support Hub- for children with a diagnosis or awaiting an assessment- see attached flyer.



Punctuality Matters!

Did you know?

The early work in our classes helps the children to embed and practise the skills that they have learnt previously.

Our registers close at 8:55am.

Missed minutes = missed learning = missed opportunities!

Being frequently late for school means lost learning:

- o Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- o Arriving 15 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 2 weeks a year.
- o Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

Our school attendance policy can be found [here](#).

If you need advice or support regarding attendance or punctuality please contact our Pastoral Lead, Mrs Willis, at jo.willis@summercroft.herts.sch.uk.



At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit nationalcollege.com.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about OFCOM MEDIA REPORT 2025

Every year, Ofcom releases its Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report, offering fresh insights into how young people are using digital platforms. The 2025 edition highlights key safeguarding concerns as children's engagement with social media, gaming, and live streaming continues to grow. This guide pulls out the top statistics from the report, focussing on the main areas of concern for parents and educators.

ONLINE LIVES

Children are engaging with social media and online content at increasing rates:

37%
3-5s

now have access to social media platforms; however, only a small proportion use it independently of parents.

79%
3-17s

have a social media profile, with 16% including a public photo.

66%
3-17s

watch livestreamed videos regularly, with 16% of them streaming their own content.

POST

PARENTAL CONCERNS

Parents are increasingly worried about online risks:

70% fear their child may see age-inappropriate or sexual content.

68% fear exposure to content that promotes self-harm.

72% worry about their child distinguishing real from fake information.

61% worry about exposure to extreme views.

69% are concerned about online bullying.

ONLINE GAMING

Gaming remains popular but raises concerns:

74%

of children say they play with someone they know, while 32% report playing with strangers.

62%

of parents worry about their children talking to strangers while gaming.

31%

of children who game online chat with people they don't know.

SCREEN TIME

Screen time is still a major challenge for parents:

70%

of parents of 13-17s say it's difficult to manage screen time.

33%

of 8-17s think their own screen time is too high.

At 29% vs 24%
boys were more likely than girls to disagree that their screen time is too high.

18

HARMFUL CONTENT & INTERACTIONS

A significant minority of children continue to have negative feelings about social media and messaging apps:

Nearly four in ten 8-17s believe that people are mean or unkind to each other online all or most of the time.

Girls aged 8-17 are more likely than boys to say they have experienced someone being nasty or hurtful to them online (31%).

One third of teenagers agree that it's important that people can say what they want online, even if it offends someone.

ONLINE SAFETY IN SCHOOLS

Positively, the vast majority of children reported learning about online safety at school:

92%

of children aged 8-17 recall at least one lesson on online safety and most report finding them useful.

The top three topics covered are:

63%

How to recognise harmful content.

63%

How to keep personal information safe.

62%

Being kind and respectful online.

#WakeUpWednesday

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