



8 May 2026

Headteacher's Message

Dear Parents and Carers,

Another extremely busy couple of weeks at Summencroft seem to have flown past! The children continue to be immersed in their most recent topics and Mrs Richardson and I enjoyed getting into all the classrooms last week to visit the teaching and learning in action and then talk about the lessons with a number of children from each class after. The children we spoke to modelled our Summencroft behaviour expectations and were polite and respectful through the discussions. They were also very positive about the learning in the classroom and we could see the impact of the oracy strategies that have been embedded in the classroom with the children using some of the build, challenge and instigate sentence stems that have been introduced this year. It is always a pleasure spending time in the classrooms and last week didn't disappoint.

Our Opal Play afternoon was a huge success and it was great to have so many of you come and join us. Over 200 parents and carers were able to attend, which is a much higher turnout than we expected. Thanks to those of you who were happy to stand for the presentations. We enjoyed the opportunity to share the rationale behind developing our lunchtime provision and the journey we have been on so far. It was also lovely to hear all the positive feedback throughout the afternoon and I know many of you hadn't realised how many different play opportunities there are for the children every lunchtime. The children were very proud and enthusiastic to show off all the zones. It really has had a positive impact on children's engagement, behaviour and readiness to learn in the afternoons. We are excited to keep developing the play opportunities over the coming months and really appreciate your support with donations. A huge well done to Mrs Bugg for leading on OPAL over the past 18 months and to Mrs Bell-Smith for supporting her in the implementation everyday.



Our Orchestra performed their Spring concert to the children in Year 2—Year 6 last Thursday. There was a mix of whole orchestra pieces as well as individuals playing their chosen instruments. Together they created a great concert and I was extremely proud of how well they performed. They are still quite a small group but they make up for it with their talent and enthusiasm. There were some classical pieces, including Vivaldi's "Spring" from *The Four Seasons*, and some more modern pieces, including Lewis Capaldi and "Lush Life", which the audience were able to sing along to. Thanks to all the children in our orchestra for the excellent performance and to Mr Dodgson for leading them. The orchestra is for children from Year 3 and above, so if your child was inspired by what they saw and would be interested in joining the orchestra then please contact the office; the more the merrier.





8 May 2026

Headteacher's Message continued

We have had a couple of important assemblies over the past fortnight too. Last week, Ella Dove came in to school to share her story of overcoming adversity. Ella was out on a run when she had an accident and ended up having her leg amputated. Ella spoke of how determination pips disability and how her positivity is enabling her to do things she wouldn't previously have thought possible. Ella modelled all of our learning powers and provided a truly inspirational real-life example of how you can achieve what you want with a growth mindset. I was extremely proud of our children for how well they listened to Ella and the empathetic questions they asked her throughout the assembly. Our Summercroft ethos of celebrating diversity certainly shone through and Ella commented on how sensitive and mature the children were. We have also been celebrating Deaf Awareness Week which gave us the opportunity to look at the challenges that are faced by children who have hearing impairments. We looked at the inspirational story of the Chinese dancer, Tai Lihua, who lost her ability to hear at the age of 2 through an illness but has gone on to become one of China's most famous dancers. The children also thought about how they can support someone who has a hearing impairment and ensure they are included in what they are doing.



Looking ahead, we have a busy couple of weeks before the end of this half-term. Our Year 6 children will be sitting their Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) in GPS, reading and maths next week and I am sure you will join me in wishing them well throughout the week. Mr Carter and Miss Tarran have been really impressed with how hard they have been working in the lead up to the national tests and we know they will all be doing their best in each paper.

There is also an opportunity for parents to attend an Online Safety Workshop delivered by the 2 Johns. This is on **Thursday 14th May at 8:00pm** and I would strongly recommend you join the session if possible. The 2 Johns are widely recognised as experts in this field and come highly recommended. They will give you a measured and sensible approach to ensuring your children can stay safe online while also sharing the biggest issues that we are seeing for children currently. Further information can be found on their [website](#). They will also be delivering workshops to each year group face-to-face in school on Wednesday 13th May which is part of our ongoing teaching to support online safety.

Kind regards,

Stephen Jess
Headteacher

Young Carers

Many young people qualify to be classed as a young carer. A young carer is a young person who, due to the needs of another family member (including siblings), has adaptations to their general childhood.

If you feel that your child may be eligible to be classed as a young carer, or has been identified and you think that we may be unaware, please contact Mrs Willis via the school office.

For more information, please see the link below, plus details of how the service is changing.

[Young carers in Hertfordshire | Hertfordshire County Council](#)

From 1 April 2026, Hertfordshire County Council will be bringing support for young carers in-house, when the young carer contract with Carers in Hertfordshire comes to an end, integrating it fully within the council's services. The existing Carers in Hertfordshire contract for adult carers will remain in place. Work has been ongoing with young carers, families and professionals to make sure the change is smooth, and the support will continue and stay very similar. This includes assessments, help with managing caring responsibilities, regular reviews, ensuring the voices of young carers inform the support they receive, and support in preparing for adulthood.



EYFS

Ready, Steady, Grow!

EYFS are fully immersed in their topic, *Ready, Steady, Grow*. Over the past couple of weeks, the children have enjoyed stories, including *The Tiny Seed*, *Jasper's Beanstalk* and *Jack and the Beanstalk* as a stimulus to their learning.

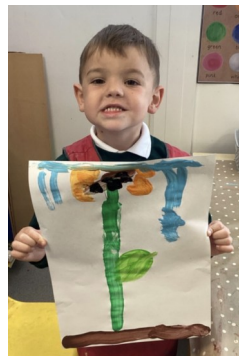
Having read *The Tiny Seed*, by Eric Carle, we looked at sunflowers and discussed the different parts, including the stem, petals, leaves and seedhead. We looked at different types of sunflowers and then painted them from observation. In Reception, we labelled the different parts using our phonics knowledge.

The story also informed us about the life cycle of sunflowers. We looked at how the seed changes, turns into a seedling, young plant, flower in bud, flower in loom and then the seeds fall out. The children created their own lifecycle booklet to show the different stages. They were very excited to plant their own sunflower seeds and are looking forward to caring for them and watching them grow!

This week, we embarked on our journey up the beanstalk to the giant's castle. The children loved joining in with the repeated refrains in the story. They sequenced the pictures to retell the main events in the story and enjoyed building castles in the clouds using wooden 3d shapes.

In Reception, the children created number beanstalks, by ordering number leaves from 1 to 20. They were experts when it came to planting their bean seeds but were fascinated to see how their beanstalk would grow when planting it in cotton wool not soil.

Please keep us posted on Tapestry about your child's sunflower growth over the next few weeks. We are looking forward to seeing how tall they will grow!





Year 1

African Experts

In maths, Year 1 has been learning to count in 2s, 5s and 10s. The children have really enjoyed chanting the numbers and we are endeavouring to keep pace with the children on the rolling numbers video! We will keep practising this at school, so if you would like to help your child at home please watch this link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jf2BHUSbt_Y

Our class text, *One Day on our Blue Planet...in the Savannah*, features detailed illustrations. Taking inspiration from this, our art lessons have focused on the lilac breasted roller bird. We looked closely at its shape and drew it with pencils. We then tried to paint the colours accurately with watercolours. As part of these art lessons, the children have studied bird feathers closely. We manipulated paper by tearing, cutting and bending it to make a feather. We created a class ostrich by using all the feathers.

The class text has ensured that the children are lion experts. The children have used their expertise to write kenning poems about lions. They learnt that a kenning is similar to a riddle and each line ends in a word with a -er suffix. Now, the children are preparing to write their own version of the class text by becoming experts on ostriches. We have been learning lots of interesting facts about these unique birds.

Using an oracy technique called a 'traverse', the children were able to recall many geographical facts about Africa. They cannot wait to share their African fact files at the end-of-term parent presentation.



Year 2

Slug Life

This half term seems to be flying by and it was lovely to take a moment (or afternoon off from our busy schedule) to appreciate how important play is for our children during our Opal Play afternoon. It was also lovely to see so many of you there! We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did!

Even though we were away from the classroom, our learning continued in the Woodland Walk, where we found many slugs hiding under the logs. It was a good opportunity to try and identify some of the slugs that we have been learning about in our English lessons. So many of the children have been finding out about different slugs at home too! It seems that we are becoming 'Slug Experts' which is certainly helping with our information writing in class.



Our science learning this half term will also be taking us outside as we are learning about plants. We have already set up an investigation to see how seeds germinate and are carefully observing and recording the changes that are happening week by week. The children are keen to plant their seeds into pots and are eager to take them home to continue to nurture them and watch them grow.

We have lots of exciting things to look forward to over the coming months, including Sports Day and our trip to the seaside (fingers crossed). We are definitely looking forward to the warmer weather and getting outside a bit more.





Year 3

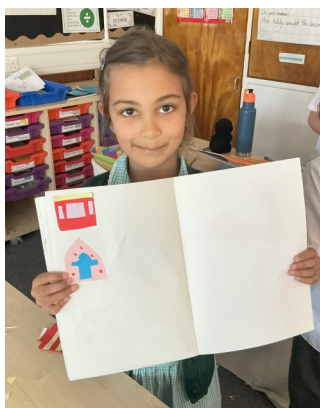
A "Space" to Call Home

Year 3 have been taken on a journey with Nyla and her dad in our class book, *The Comet*, by Joe Todd-Stanton. We've been exploring the "big move" as Nyla relocates from her peaceful home by the sea to the bustling city.

The children have been incredibly impressive, showing deep empathy for Nyla during this tricky transition. To capture her experience, the pupils wrote thoughtful diary entries, beautifully contrasting the rhythmic sounds of the waves with the fast-paced energy of the city. Their ability to step into Nyla's shoes has resulted in some truly moving pieces of writing.

Matisse-ing is Believing

In art, pupils have loved examining our local town mural, created by Leila Riddell and over 140 embroiderers. It was a fantastic way to discuss the history of our landscape through the lens of community craft. Inspired by this, we introduced the children to the bold colours and iconic designs of Henri Matisse. The classroom turned into a studio of "painting with scissors," where pupils used their creativity to cut organic shapes and lines. By experimenting with complementary colours, they have begun creating their very own town murals in the style of Matisse. The results are vibrant, bold, and definitely "a cut above!"



Opal Play

Last week we welcomed parents and carers to experience a taste of how Opal Play has transformed the children's playtimes. It was fantastic to see so many parents enjoying activities alongside the children. We saw dens being built, tasty meals being prepared and shared in the mud kitchen, and plenty of football action! Thanks again to the parents that were able to come and offer their support.





Year 4

Sequins, Science and Stories

As part of our topic work, Year 4 found out how the world-famous Notting Hill Carnival began with the Windrush Generation. Those who settled in Notting Hill faced racism and violence, so activists fought back, organising events to unite people. Inspired by this, we designed and made our own carnival masks to wear for our Windrush presentation at the end of this half term. The classrooms buzzed as the children created their masks and there were feathers and sequins galore – though perhaps not quite rivalling the 30 million sequins used every year for the Notting Hill Carnival!

In science, the children have explored human impacts on plants and animals and have found out that these impacts can be both positive and negative. Considering this half term's enquiry question, 'What impact do humans have on different habitats?' the children have pledged to be extra respectful of our wonderful school environment and find small ways to protect and enhance our outside areas.

We have continued the theme of being respectful of school resources in PSHE lessons and have noticed a real improvement in general tidiness around the classrooms this half term. Keep it up - it makes for a more productive and pleasant environment for us all to work in.

We were incredibly excited to be visited by author Ella Dove last week. It was fascinating to hear Ella's own life story and how this had inspired her to write fiction as she didn't see herself represented in books. We had lots of questions for Ella, especially about her prosthetic leg (we loved the glittery gold one she was wearing) and how she came up with the plot for her stories. We loved hearing an extract from her latest book, *How To Do Paris With One Leg*, and both her books are already proving popular in the classroom.

It is essential that the children continue to practise their times tables at home as well as in school. We ask that the children practise for at least 10 minutes, three times a week, on Times Tables Rockstars, but they may also need to practise by writing down and being tested on tables they are less confident with. We are grateful for the support you can provide at home.





Year 5

A New Beginning

It has been an exciting fortnight in Year 5, as we have dived deep into our latest literary adventure, the beautiful and thought-provoking story, *The Promise*, by Nicola Davies. Pupils in Sycamore and Hazel Class have truly immersed themselves in the story, building a deeply emotive and empathetic connection to our protagonist as she navigates a city that was once "mean and hard and ugly". After witnessing her life-changing encounter with an old woman—where a moment of desperation turned into a vow to "plant them"—the children have been exploring her transformation from a thief into a visionary holding a "forest in her arms".

The teaching and learning has been a joy to behold; the children have been busy crafting heart-wrenching letters and insightful diary entries that capture the character's shift from a "shrivelled heart" to one "rich beyond wildest dreams". Not only has their writing mirrored an enriched understanding of redemption, but their artistic talents have also shone through as they illustrated the dry wasteland's transition into a thriving metropolis as she "planted, planted, planted" among the rubble. The outcomes over these two weeks have been nothing short of outstanding, with the children demonstrating a level of empathy and creative flair that has moved us all. We are proud of how hard they have worked to build this connection, and we cannot wait to see the final published writes that the pupils will be completing as we finish our story in the coming weeks!

A Sunny River Trip

Our recent geography walk to the river was a fantastic opportunity for pupils to explore their learning in a real-world setting. In perfect weather, we walked down to the river where the children carefully observed and sketched the landscape, labelling key features such as the river's flow direction, riverbank, meander, channel, erosion and floodplain. They also thoughtfully identified examples of human impact, including rubbish and bridges.

The children approached the task with focus and enthusiasm, producing some excellent fieldwork sketches and demonstrating a strong understanding of river features. Following our learning, we enjoyed some well-deserved time in the park, making the most of the sunshine.





Year 6

Reading, Runs and Resilience

We've had a typically busy few weeks in Year 6, even with the bank holiday weekend!

We were honoured to host a visit from author Ella Dove, which provided a wonderful opportunity for us to hear from a professional writer. Beyond sharing her books, Ella talked to us about how she has overcome and embraced adversity. Her ability to create funny, engaging stories that provide representation for young people with amputations and limb differences was truly inspiring for everyone in attendance.

In sports news, our cricket competitions have officially gotten underway following just a few weeks of practice. It has been fantastic to see the students transition to the pitch, and the teams are working brilliantly together, demonstrating great sportsmanship in their opening matches.

As we finish our final SATs preparations, we want to express how hugely proud we are of the children's determination and perseverance over the last eight weeks. They have been resilient and hardworking, and that effort has truly paid off. We want the students to know that they are more than ready for the week ahead; we are already so proud of them and simply want them to do their best and go into them with confidence- they're going to smash it!

To help the children start their days in the best possible way, we would like to remind you that all Year 6 pupils are invited to join us for SATs breakfast from 8:20am, Monday to Thursday, next week. This is a great chance for them to settle in and relax with their peers before the school day begins.

Thank you, as ever, for all your support.

The Year 6 Team





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:

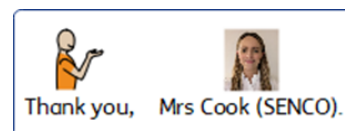
[SPACE Hertfordshire – Supporting families in Hertfordshire | Autism | ADHD | Neurodiversity](#)

[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
- Neurodiversity support Hub- for children with a diagnosis or awaiting an assessment



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.



It can be challenging for parents and carers to know whether children are spending too much time on their devices. Furthermore, it's even more of a challenge to know whether a child is addicted to the Internet and social media. As technology is becoming more pervasive, children and young people are experiencing tech-related dependencies. Do we as parents and carers have the knowledge to identify and support children and young people who may be developing an addiction to their devices?



47% of parents said they thought their children spent too much time in front of screens

What parents need to know about SCREEN ADDICTION



HEALTH & WELLBEING

Children as young as 13 are attending 'smartphone rehab' following growing concerns over screen time. There are now help centers in the UK which deal with screen addiction for children and adults showing the seriousness of device addiction. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has officially recognised gaming addiction as a modern disease. The condition was confirmed as part of their International Classification of Diseases (ICD) which serves as an international standard for diagnosing and treating health conditions.

LACK OF SLEEP

7 out of 10 children said they had missed out on sleep because of their online habits and 60% said they had neglected school work as a result. It is important that children get the sleep they need in order to focus the next day.

LOSS OF INTEREST IN OTHER THINGS

Your child may become less interested in anything that does not include their device. You may notice that your child is missing school time and generally being less engaged with other activities in the home. It is important to discuss this with your child as soon as you notice a behaviour change.



CONFIDENCE, SUPPORT & ADVICE

The Children's Commissioner report 'Life in Likes', explored how children aged 8-11 are using social media today. It showed that children are using their devices to speak to their online friends about their problems and seek acceptance and support, removing face to face interactions.

APPS CAN BE ADDICTIVE

Apps have been designed with 'psychological tricks' to constantly keep grabbing your attention. One example of this is on the app Snapchat, where you can gain 'streaks' when interacting with your friends. If you don't respond, you lose the streak. This addictive nature of apps aims to engage children and keep them coming back for more.



National Online Safety



Top Tips for Parents



LIMIT SCREEN TIME

In today's digital age, technology is an important part of a child's development so completely banning them from their device will mean they are missing out on a lot, including conversations and communication with their friends. Rather than banning them from using their devices, we suggest setting a screen time limit. Work out what you think is a suitable and healthy amount of time for your child to be on their device per week. Remember that your child may need to use devices for their school homework so only set screen limits on recreational time on their device. Once you have established this, have the conversation with them to discuss why you are implementing a screen limit. There will be others in your child's friendship group who will not have screen limits set and will be sending messages when they do not have access to their phones.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Children model their behavior on their peers, so if their parents are constantly on their device, they will see this as acceptable. Try limiting your own screen time and follow the same rules you have set for them. If you have asked your child to not use their device at the table, make sure you don't. Try setting house rules that the whole family abide by.

LESS TIME MEANS LESS EXPOSURE

There are many risks associated with devices, such as cyberbullying, grooming, sexting, viewing inappropriate content etc. Less time spent on a screen means that a child will be less exposed to these risks.

MOBILE-FREE MEAL TIMES

Have you tried to settle your child by giving them a tablet at the dinner table or restaurant? This may seem like a quick fix to calm them down but in reality, it is encouraging them to use their device as a distraction from conversation and dealing with their emotions. We suggest removing all technology from the dinner table and having conversations with your family about how their day has been.

REMOVE DEVICES FROM THEIR BEDROOM

Setting a rule about removing devices from bedrooms will help your child to get the sleep they need and be more focussed the next day at school. 20% of teenagers said that they wake up to check their social network accounts on their devices. Even by having a device switched off in their bedroom, they may be tempted to check for notifications.

ENCOURAGE ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

It may seem like an obvious solution, but encouraging children to play with their friends, read a book, or playing outdoors will help them realise they can have fun without their device. Playing football, trampolining, camping, going for a walk or swimming are all healthy replacements for screen time. Try to join them in their Outdoor activities to show your support.

STATISTICS

52% of children aged 3-4 go online for nearly 9hrs a week

82% of children aged 5-7 go online for nearly 9.5hrs a week

93% of children aged 8-11 go online for nearly 13.5hrs a week

99% of children aged 12-15 go online for nearly 20.5hrs a week

Children and Parents: Media Use and Attitudes Report 2018