



Weekly Newsletter

Friday 11 September 2026 • *Aspire to be Amazing*

What a wonderful start we have had to the new school year. It has been lovely to see the children return so positively, and particularly to watch our new Kestrels and children joining other year groups begin to find their feet. Across school, classrooms are already full of purposeful learning, new routines and plenty of excitement about the year ahead.

Our weekly newsletter will once again give you a flavour of what has been happening in each class, alongside important updates and a regular look at some of the things we are developing across school this year.

A welcome from Mrs Bacchus – our SENDCo

A very warm welcome back from Mrs Bacchus, our school SENDCo. Mrs Bacchus is looking forward to continuing to work closely with children, families and staff throughout the year to ensure that children with additional needs are well supported and able to thrive at Ashton Hayes.

We know how important good communication between home and school is, so if you would like to speak with Mrs Bacchus about your child, ask a question or arrange a meeting, please contact her by email in the first instance:

cbacchus@ashtonhayes.cheshire.sch.uk

Mrs Bacchus will then get back to you or arrange a convenient time to talk.

New this year at Ashton Hayes: Ready Steady Handwrite

Each week, I would like to use this section to tell you a little more about something new or developing at Ashton Hayes. We begin with handwriting.

This year we have introduced Ready Steady Handwrite, a consistent whole-school approach to the teaching of handwriting. All classes, from Kestrels upwards, are now taught handwriting every day. For most children this will usually take place at the beginning of their writing lesson, while Kestrels and Sparrowhawks have separate, dedicated handwriting sessions.

We believe this matters because fluent, automatic handwriting frees children to concentrate on what they want to say rather than on the physical process of forming letters. A consistent approach also helps children develop correct letter formation, appropriate size and spacing, stamina and pride in the presentation of their work. Like reading, spelling and number fluency, handwriting is a foundational skill: a small amount of focused practice every day can make a significant difference over time.

Mrs Salt

Over the summer holidays, Mrs Salt make the difficult decision to fully retire from her role at Ashton Hayes Primary School, to spend more time at home with her family. As many of you will know, Mrs Salt has been a legend at Ashton Hayes for well over 20 years. She has been a remarkable and much-loved servant of the school and we are all going to miss her humour and no-nonsense approach. We are thankful to have an equally wonderful person to step into her role – Keith Page, our Site Manager has agreed to take on the additional hours for us and we are delighted that we will see more of Keith in school. We haven't yet

organized our goodbye to Mrs Salt, but will let you all know what and when this will be, as I know many of you will have wonderful memories of Mrs Salt and am sure will want to join us in recognizing those.

Weekly class information for families

To make weekly routines as clear as possible, teachers have also shared the practical information families most often need. If you have any questions, please speak to your child's class teacher or email the school office. Kestrels' information has/will be shared via Tapestry.

Sparrowhawks – regular weekly routines	
Reading	Please keep reading books/diaries in school every day and aim to practise reading at home five times each week.
Spellings	Spellings are sent home on Tuesday. There is no weekly spelling test.
PE	Friday.
Forest School	Friday. Please ensure suitable outdoor clothing and wellies are available.
Useful reminders	Please send a water bottle and snack, and ensure children have wellies and spare clothes available, including socks and underwear. If you need to speak to Mrs Cuthbert, catch her at the end of the day where possible; otherwise please contact the school office.
Owls – regular weekly routines	
Reading	Reading diaries and books should be in school every day in reading folders. Children may change books when ready, with dedicated changing time every Friday. Please aim for 10–15 minutes of reading at home at least five times each week and record this in the diary where possible.
Spellings	Set on Friday on paper and checked the following Friday.
PE	Thursday. Children should come in PE kit with long hair tied back. Layers and spare socks are useful for outdoor PE.
Forest School	Thursday, in all weather except high winds. Please provide suitable clothing; wellies may remain in school.
Home learning	No formal weekly homework. Please focus on reading, weekly spellings and key maths skills. Times-table practice, including Times Tables Rock Stars, will increase as the year progresses.
Useful reminder	Please name everything brought into school, including clothing, water bottles, lunch boxes and reading folders.
Peregrines – regular weekly routines	
Reading	Reading diaries are kept in school and reading books should be in school every day. Books are changed when finished. Children are expected to read at home every night and may have a different reading book at home if they prefer.
Spellings	Sent home on Friday and tested the following Friday. Spare lists are kept on the class spelling display.
PE	Thursday. Children should come in school PE kit, not football kits; tracksuits/jackets are useful in winter.
Forest School	Thursday. Wellies are kept in school and Forest School clothing should be brought in each week.
Home learning	Year 5: reading comprehension homework on Friday, due the following Friday. Year 4: regular times-table practice using TT Rock Stars and timestables.co.uk. Times tables are tested on Friday.
Independence	Mr Morris is encouraging children to take responsibility for belongings, water bottles, ordering their own snack, reading, times-table practice and being prepared for PE and Forest School. School provides all equipment, so children do not need their own pencil cases.
Buzzards – regular weekly routines	
Reading	Reading books should be in school every day. Aim for five home reads each week – every day is even better. Children should record their own reading in their diary (date, book title and pages read as a minimum). Reading diaries should be brought in every Friday to be checked.
Spellings	Sent home on paper on Tuesday and tested the following Monday.
PE	Monday. Children should come in school PE kit with long hair tied back and jewellery removed (or piercings covered if they cannot be removed). Dress for the weather; spare socks are useful in wet conditions.

Forest School	Monday. Long sleeves and legs all year, plus waterproofs and suitable outdoor footwear. Add hats, scarves and gloves in winter. Wellies should remain in school.
Home learning	A reading, SPAG or Maths homework is sent home each Friday and should be returned no later than the following Friday. Children should continue practising times tables to 12 x 12; Friday "Mad Minutes" will build recall fluency.
Useful reminders	Bring a refillable water bottle every day; snacks from home must be nut-free. School provides all learning equipment. Please name all clothing and leave non-essential items such as toys and trading cards at home. Year 6 SATs information will follow towards the end of the Autumn Term.

Online Safety: Back to School and AI

Artificial Intelligence is becoming part of everyday life at remarkable speed, bringing both opportunities and new online-safety questions for families. This week we are sharing a short 'Back to School and AI' video for parents and carers. It provides a useful, accessible overview of some of the things families should be aware of and is well worth a few minutes of your time.

[Watch the Back to School and AI video](#)

There is also a separate safeguarding newsletter attached to this week's newsletter. This contains further useful information and advice for families and forms part of our ongoing commitment to keeping safeguarding and online safety visible throughout the year.

We are also running a parents information session on online safety on 28th September at 9am. We would love to see as many parents there as possible. The session should last about 30 minutes and will be in the school hall.

Around the classes

Kestrels

What a truly wonderful first week we have had in Kestrels. It is hard to believe that just a week ago, so much of school was completely new to our little ones because they have settled into life here so beautifully.

This week has been all about learning how *to be a Kestrel*... finding our way around, getting to know each other, learning our routines and discovering all the wonderful places and possibilities our classroom and school have to offer. We have practised everything from our self-registration and lunch choices to looking after our belongings, moving around school and knowing what to do when we need help. Already, so much of it is beginning to feel like second nature.

Most of all, we have been amazed by the children's independence. They are making choices, finding what they need, looking after their spaces and each other, and becoming increasingly confident to explore and learn without needing an adult beside them.

And woven into all of that, our first phonics and number learning, stories, songs, signs, mark making, creating and lots and lots of time to play, investigate and follow our curiosity. We have explored our school grounds, talked about our families and begun discovering just how exciting learning together can be.

For such a tiny group of people at the very beginning of their school journey, they have absolutely blown us away. They are kind, capable, curious and already such an important little team.

What a start, Kestrels. We are so excited for the year ahead. 

Sparrowhawks

The Year One children have settled so well into Sparrowhawk Class - we are all really proud of them.

They have worked hard learning lots of new routines, exploring the provision as well as starting their learning in so many different areas!

In writing we have started to learn about our new text - The Girl at the Front of the Class. They have been using similes to describe the girl and exploring plurals and some lovely descriptive language.

They have continued their phonics journey and been practising sounds. We have also been working hard to practise our letter formation - a, c and d.

In Maths we have been exploring numbers to 10 and finding ways to represent different numbers.

We have also started our learning in Geography and Science. In Geography we have been looking at maps of the world, identifying the difference between land and sea. In Science we have been exploring materials; the children were brilliant at finding items made of different materials in the grounds.

We have had great fun in our newly developing outdoor area (thank you to Keith for the fantastic fencing!). We have made potions, explored flowers, made mini worlds in our tuff tray and built dens, bridges and vehicles with the loose parts.

We can't wait for another exciting week next week.

Owls

What a brilliant start to the year for Owl Class! The children have settled in incredibly well, and I have been so impressed with how quickly they have adapted to our new routines and expectations. Their behaviour and attitude towards their learning have been fantastic - a very strong start, Owls!

We have started our first book of the year - and what a book! *Leo and the Octopus*. We have made some fantastic predictions about what the story might be about and have begun writing our own poems to describe an octopus.

We have started learning about place value, the foundation of so much of our Maths learning. I have been particularly impressed with how the children have started using their Maths journals to explain and show their thinking.

Our first History topic is Toys and Childhood. This week, we explored toys from the past and present and placed them on a timeline. The children will also be bringing home a short toy survey for parents and grandparents to complete about the toys you played with when you were younger. Please help us by completing and returning it - your answers will become part of our historical research!

We have begun our topic on Plants, starting with seeds and bulbs. We were amazed to discover which familiar plants grow from different seeds and bulbs!

In Computing, we have started exploring IT Around Us, identifying the different ways information technology is used in everyday life. In Spanish, we have begun learning about the seasons.

A fantastic first week, Owls! I am incredibly proud of the way you have started the year, and I am really looking forward to seeing everything we achieve together!

Peregrines

It has been a fantastic start to the year for my Peregrines! They have settled into their new class really well since the Summer holidays and are beginning to get to grips with all of my new routines and expectations.

It has been lovely to see the children becoming increasingly independent already. They are taking more responsibility for looking after their own equipment and are remembering to read independently each evening. They have also started working really well together on their tables, supporting and reminding one another about our expectations and helping each other to make positive choices.

We have also begun enjoying our new class read, *An Alien in the Jam Factory*, and the children have been enjoying listening to the story and sharing their thoughts and predictions.

I am proud of how positively the Peregrines have started the year. They have shown great enthusiasm, resilience and a willingness to learn, and I am looking forward to seeing them continue to grow in confidence and independence over the coming weeks!

Buzzards

Buzzard Class have made a wonderful start to the new school year! The first few days were all about settling back in, catching up with friends, sharing holiday news and being a team. We've agreed on a class contract, we've all got jobs and our Year 6 children have been brilliant in their important role as buddies, helping their little buddies to settle in too. Speaking of important roles,

congratulations to William Shepherd and Connie Joynson who will be our Junior Safety Officers this year. There's also lots of buzz and excitement amongst Year 6 about the new role of Head Boy and Head Girl!

We have already been busy with lots of exciting learning. In English, we have been exploring the beautiful picture book 'The Midnight Fair' and creating metaphor poems to bring its mysterious setting to life. In Maths, the children have been working on place value.

Our afternoons have been full of Science, History, Computing, Art and PE. Dodgeball was a particular hit, while in Computing the children have enjoyed creating pictures from simple shapes using PowerPoint. In History, we have been debating the chronology of British history and using our reasoning skills to justify our ideas.

It has been a fantastic first week, and we can't wait to see what the rest of the term brings!

Attendance

Good attendance is one of the foundations of successful learning. Being in school regularly helps children keep up with their learning, maintain friendships, feel part of their class community and benefit from the full range of experiences we provide. We also recognise that children do become genuinely unwell and that individual circumstances can sometimes affect attendance; our approach will always be to work sensitively and constructively with families while keeping children's education at the centre.

Each week we will share our attendance picture here. As this is the beginning of a new school year, the figures can move quite quickly in the first few weeks, particularly in our smaller classes, so they are best viewed as part of an emerging picture rather than in isolation.

Class	This week	Cumulative for the year
Kestrels	97.83%	98.51%
Sparrowhawks	100%	100%
Owls	98.15%	98.72%
Peregrines	97.52%	97.71%
Buzzards	100%	98.9%
Whole school	98.69%	98.72%

A fantastic start to the year: whole-school attendance this week was 98.69%, with Sparrowhawks and Buzzards both achieving 100%. Thank you to families for supporting such a positive start. As always, we recognise that children do become genuinely unwell and individual circumstances can affect attendance; our focus is on working positively with families and helping every child to be in school whenever they are well enough to attend.

From our local community

Ashton Hayes Village Shop is looking for a Deputy Manager. Please see the advert below for full details.



Deputy Manager

We're looking for a Deputy Manager to join our friendly team and help keep our much-loved village shop running smoothly

**Minimum 22 hours per week
Thursday, Friday and Saturday
Plus holiday and sickness cover when needed**

About the role:

Support the Shop Manager with day-to-day operations

Lead and motivate volunteers

Deliver excellent customer service

Help with stock management, ordering and displays

Retail experience preferable but not essential

If you enjoy working with people and want to contribute to village life, we'd love to hear from you.

Interested? Please email your CV and a short covering note to amcshop@btconnect.com or drop it in at the shop.

Have a lovely weekend!

Mr Bell