ASHTON HAYES PRIMARY SCHOOL

Our Weekly Newsletter | Friday 20 November 2026

Inside this week: Learning across all five classes • Three Forest School adventures • Christmas dates and important arrangements • Attendance • Meet our Chair of Governors • Community news

A Warm Welcome from Mr Bell

Dear Parents and Carers,

I hope you have all had a lovely week. It has been another busy and enjoyable few days at Ashton Hayes, with lots of wonderful learning taking place across our classrooms. As always, it is a pleasure to see the enthusiasm, curiosity and determination that our children bring to school each day. With Christmas approaching, there is also a great deal to look forward to, so please take time to read our events calendar carefully.

An important reminder: reporting absences

Could I please ask all parents and carers to let us know whenever their child is absent from school, including the reason for the absence. This is particularly important from a safeguarding perspective. Each morning, we need to know that every child is safe and accounted for. If a child has not arrived and we have not received an explanation, we have a responsibility to follow this up.

You can report an absence by telephoning school from 8.30am or emailing the school office. Please contact us as early as possible on the morning of the absence. I appreciate mornings can be hectic, especially with a poorly child, but that quick message really does make a difference. Thank you for helping us keep everyone safe.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support and for everything you do to make Ashton Hayes such a special school community. Have a wonderful weekend!

Martin Bell, Headteacher

School Reminders

Morning drop-off: growing in confidence

Children in Year 1 and above should normally be dropped off at the school gate and walk around independently to their classroom doors, unless there is a particular need for additional support. Reception children should continue to walk to their classroom with their parents or carers. These arrangements help our older children build independence, responsibility and confidence, while giving our youngest children the reassurance they need. They also support a calm, organised start to the day. Thank you for your understanding and flexibility where individual needs require a different approach.

Parking considerately: looking after our neighbours

Please be mindful when parking at drop-off and collection. In particular, do not park across farm tracks, field entrances or access gates, even briefly. Our farming neighbours need to be able to enter and leave their fields, often with large machinery. We are fortunate to be part of such a lovely rural community, and your consideration is greatly appreciated.

Beyblade fun: a new lunchtime club!

Beyblades have become very popular! For now, Year 5 and Year 6 children may bring them to school provided they play safely and sensibly and follow our expectations. We know younger children enjoy them too, so from Monday 23 November, Mr Bell will run a weekly Beyblade lunchtime club in Owls' classroom. Children in other year groups may bring a small number of Beyblades on club days. These must stay in their school bags at all other times and must not be taken onto the playground. We are looking forward to some friendly battles!

Christmas Is Coming! Important School Dates

We have a wonderfully busy few weeks ahead, right through to the end of term on Friday 18 December. Please read this overview carefully: some events involve special clothing or different collection arrangements. We will send further information and reminders about individual events nearer the time. Please keep an eye on your emails and School Spider.

Date	Who	Event and important information
25 Nov	Owls	Norton Priory visit
27 Nov	Owls & Peregrines	Dance and movement workshops — come to school in PE kit
3 Dec	Whole school	Theatr Clwyd Christmas pantomime
4 Dec	Whole school	PTFA Elfridges and after-school mulled wine
5 Dec	Everyone welcome	Forest Tots
8 Dec	EYFS & KS1	Nativity performance
8 Dec	Signed-up children	Bound in Sound rehearsal at Helsby High School — parents collect from the high school at the end of the day; details to follow
9 Dec	EYFS & KS1	Nativity performance
11 Dec	Whole school	Church assembly in church
15 Dec	KS2	Christmas Carols at St John's Church, 5.30pm
16 Dec	Whole school	Christmas Jumper Day, Fun Run and Christmas Lunch
17 Dec	Peregrines	Tatton Park visit
17 Dec	Signed-up children	Bound in Sound at Chester Cathedral
18 Dec	Whole school	Last day of the autumn term

Please remember: PE kit for Owls and Peregrines on 27 November; collection from Helsby High School for children attending the Bound in Sound rehearsal on 8 December. More detailed event information will follow.

Carols in the Church – Tuesday 15 December

We are looking forward to a lovely festive evening at St John the Evangelist Church at 5.30pm for our Key Stage 2 children and families. Tickets cost £2.50 each via School Spider and must be purchased no later than Monday 7 December. Initially, tickets are limited to two per KS2 child. Children performing do not need a ticket; siblings attending do need a ticket and count towards the two-ticket allocation. If any tickets remain after bookings close and numbers are finalised, additional tickets may be offered on a first-come, first-served basis. All proceeds support lunchtime play facilities and equipment.

Classroom News

Kestrels – Little Learners, Big Achievements!

It has been another lovely week in Kestrels, with our youngest children continuing to grow in confidence, independence and enthusiasm for learning. We are proud of the way they are developing friendships, working together and becoming increasingly confident in classroom routines. Every day brings opportunities to explore, investigate, ask questions and discover something new. Their early reading, writing and number skills continue to develop, and it is wonderful to see those little moments of achievement — mastering a new skill, persevering or showing kindness to a friend. Keep being curious, kind and amazing, Kestrels!

Sparrowhawks – Another Wonderful Week!

Sparrowhawks have had a fantastic and very busy week! In Maths, we have been learning all about the number 7, the smaller numbers that make 7, and subtraction by counting backwards and taking away. In English, we continued Snow White and the Seven Bears, writing sentences about where Snow White looked for her teddy using positional language, and exploring the suffix -ed and the past tense.

In History, our Great Fire of London learning has continued through books, the Pudding Lane Bakery, and imaginative small-world and construction activities. Do have a look at our work on Facebook and Instagram! We also consolidated our learning during a fantastic Forest School day — thank you, Mrs Mochrie. In Phonics, we have been revisiting sounds and using them to blend and read words.

Our Nativity preparations are well underway. The singing is beautiful, and we are so impressed by how well the children have learned their lines. Thank you to families for the costumes and all your support at home!

Owls – Learning, Discovery and Determination

In English, Owls have been identifying their writer’s knowledge, focusing on exclamations, adverbs and conjunctions as they prepare to plan their final piece of writing. In Maths, Year 3 have begun exploring division. It has been a challenge, but everyone is showing fantastic determination and discovering the importance of practising times tables at home and in school.

In History, we travelled back to the Mesolithic period, learning how people used flint to make sharper tools, began domesticating animals such as wolves and developed better shelters as they moved away from a nomadic lifestyle. We are excited to bring this learning to life on our trip next week! In Spanish,

we said ¡Adiós! to Las estaciones by making four-seasons trees. Next we will explore Christmas traditions and festive vocabulary in Spain and other Spanish-speaking countries. In RE, we continued learning about Judaism, focusing on the synagogue and its important features.

Peregrines – Another Fantastic Week!

Peregrines have been working hard across the curriculum. In English, they explored a new text linked to Nen and the Lonely Fisherman, hunting for writer's knowledge and the choices authors make to bring stories to life. In Maths, Year 4 have been perfecting their 11 and 12 times tables.

In Art, the children continued drawing realistic faces, concentrating on face shapes, ears and hair to complement last week's facial features. They also enjoyed an outdoor learning day with Mrs Mochrie and Jay, making Viking longboats and exploring soap carving to create arrowheads. In PSHE, Peregrines explored Breaking the Silence for Anti-Bullying Week, thinking about speaking up, supporting others and making sure everyone feels heard. Well done, Peregrines!

Buzzards – Working Hard and Aiming High!

Our Year 6 children continue to show growing maturity, independence and determination. As the oldest pupils in school, Buzzards have an important role in setting a positive example, and it is lovely to see their confidence, teamwork and sense of responsibility developing. They continue to build their knowledge and skills across the curriculum, approaching challenges with resilience and taking pride in their achievements. A highlight was their Forest School design-and-build challenge, which you can read about in our Forest School section. Well done, Buzzards!

Forest School Adventures

Sparrowhawks – The Great Fire of London Comes to Life!



With perfect weather and plenty of excitement, Sparrowhawks stepped back to 1666 to investigate how fires spread. They discovered that passing water along a line was much more effective than everyone running backwards and forwards, and explored how moving air could help flames spread to neighbouring houses. They saw how firebreaks could slow the spread, and discussed the three things

fire needs: heat, fuel and oxygen. After lunch, a carefully supervised campfire brought exciting demonstrations, including “dragon sneezes” and multicoloured flames, while bread cooked over the fire. A wonderful day of history, science, teamwork and outdoor adventure!

Peregrines – A Viking Adventure!



Peregrines became Vikings for the day, setting out to row across the North Sea to Lindisfarne! One crew never left the dock, another lost half its sailors, one boat sank, and one determined team made it to shore. The children then set up a Viking longhouse and made pretend weapons for their imaginary raids. They designed and built longboats — some rather more ambitious than the small models originally planned! While apples baked on the roaring fire, expertly tended by Jay, stories were shared and teamwork shone through. A fantastic day of imagination, hands-on history and outdoor learning.

Forest School Adventures – Continued

Buzzards – Teamwork, Tools and Toasted Apples!



Buzzards were challenged to design and build prototype welly boot removers. After exploring some examples, they chose their groups carefully and worked with wood and tools under clear safety expectations. With a limited number of saws and other tools, they shared resources, exchanged ideas and supported one another. Even when designs broke or did not go to plan, their resilience was brilliant. By the end of the day, one prototype was complete and several others were very close; the work will continue over the coming weeks. The children also discussed the cost of materials, labour and production. Their Forest School snack was delicious Fairtrade apples stuffed with butter, sugar and raisins, baked on the fire. We could not be prouder of their creativity, teamwork and determination!

Our Attendance This Week

Class	This week	Year to date
Kestrels	87.50%	97.40%
Sparrowhawks	97.35%	97.03%
Owls	94.81%	96.27%
Peregrines	93.65%	97.70%
Buzzards	99.21%	98.16%
Whole school	95.03%	97.30%

A huge well done to Buzzards, who achieved our highest attendance this week with a fantastic 99.21%! Whole-school attendance was 95.03% this week, with cumulative attendance at 97.30%. Thank you for supporting good attendance and punctuality.

Get to Know Your Governors

Meet James Lutton – Chair of Governors



I am the Chair of the Board of Governors, having joined as a new governor in 2019 and taken over the role of Chair in 2023. I have two children in school — Maggie in Year 5 and Sammy in Year 3.

As a family, we have lived in Ashton Hayes for 10 years and have been involved in various community projects, including the Parish Council and Golden Lion Committee, alongside my role as a school governor. Community is at the heart of what I believe in, and that is what first got me involved with the school, even before the children started attending.

My background is as a Chartered Surveyor, having worked for a practice in Chester for 20 years. I recently left to set up my own business, giving me more time to spend on my most important job — being a parent!

As with most parents, life is busy, running between swimming, football, Beavers and everything else. But we also find time to be a bit of an adventure family. We love travelling, and there is nothing we enjoy more than sitting around a campfire together with s'mores and hot chocolate.

I am so proud of the hard work our dedicated school staff put in, day in and day out, offering opportunities to children across such a wide range of areas. Whether that is sport, reading, acting, singing, academic learning or becoming a budding Bear Grylls — whatever their interests, there is something for everyone!

James Lutton, Chair of Governors

Could You Help Shape Our School's Future?

We are looking for a co-opted governor to join our governing board. We particularly welcome skills in finance, HR, health and safety, law, business or community engagement. You do not need previous governance experience — just a willingness to contribute your time, expertise and enthusiasm to our school community. Please see the original poster below for details.



Community News & Christmas

A Big Thank You to Spy Hill Farm!

Spy Hill Farm Trees, here in Ashton Hayes, have very kindly donated this year's school Christmas tree. We are incredibly grateful! If you are considering a real tree this year, we would wholeheartedly recommend supporting this local family-run farm. Choose a freshly cut Nordmann Fir straight from the field, enjoy a forest walk with children and dogs, and explore sizes from smaller potted trees to large statement trees, including discounted "Wonky Trees". Reservations, local delivery and logs are also available. Open 21 November–20 December. Find out more at www.spyhillfarm.com.

Free Chester FC Women Tickets for Families!

Enjoy a free family afternoon of football! Sunday 29 November: Chester FC Women v Warrington Town, 2pm. Sunday 13 December: Chester FC Women v West Didsbury & Chorlton AFC, 2pm. There is no limit on the number of free tickets families can claim. Register at form.jotform.com/251972960032356; your name will be added to the guest list, and you simply give your name at the turnstile. Turnstiles usually open 30 minutes before kick-off. Free parking and refreshments are available.

The Giving Tree – Sharing Christmas Kindness

St John's Church is supporting families through the Save the Family Giving Tree. Collect a gift label from the village Community Shop, choose a gift and return it wrapped and clearly labelled to the Community Shop by Thursday 3 December, or bring it to the All Age Service at St John's Church on Sunday 6 December at 10.30am. Thank you for helping make Christmas brighter for others.

