Hillside Specialist School & College

Providing exceptional education for all students

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 2026

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- **Monday 2nd November**
  SCHOOL REOPENS
- **Friday 27th November**
  INSET DAY
- **Friday 18th December to Monday 4th January**
  CHRISTMAS BREAK

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

Please make sure you download the Arbor app as this is where we send important messages and you can see pupil information.

You are now able to choose your child's dinner menu



STAFF NEWS

This term we have welcomed new:
Office member, Lucy Hinksman,
Site Supervisor, Alistair Silcock, and
Teacher, Daisy Binns in Chestnut class.
Teaching Assistants:
Louise Hirst
Renaise Carter
Rachel Duke
Nasim Zanguee
Marion Tierney
Donna Graham
Sarah Clark

We are thrilled we have had so many internal promotions and extremely proud that so many of our staff's hard work and NVQ studies are paying off.

REMINDER:

SCHOOL REOPENS ON MONDAY 2nd NOVEMBER

SCHOOL NEWS

Autumn Attendance Update

Thank you for your continued support with attendance. Every day in school counts and regular attendance helps children make the most of their learning, friendships and wider school experiences.

Our whole-school attendance for Autumn 1 so far is 90.7%.
Did you know?

- 95% attendance means a child misses around ½ day of school every two weeks.
- 90% attendance means a child misses approximately 1 day every two weeks.
- A child with 90% attendance misses around 19 school days each year, which is almost 4 weeks of learning.
- Over a child's school career, this can equate to a significant amount of missed learning time.
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Attendance Raffle - Autumn 2
To encourage and celebrate good attendance, we will be running an Attendance Raffle during Autumn 2.

Every pupil who achieves 95% attendance or above during Autumn 2 will be entered into a prize draw to win a £30 voucher of their choice.
Good attendance gives children the best opportunity to achieve their potential, and we look forward to celebrating the fantastic attendance of our pupils at the end of term.

If you have any concerns about your child's attendance or would like support, please contact:

Emma Pettitt – Attendance Champion

📧 e.pettitt@hillside.lancs.sch.uk

For more information see Working Together to Improve Attendance





SCHOOL NEWS



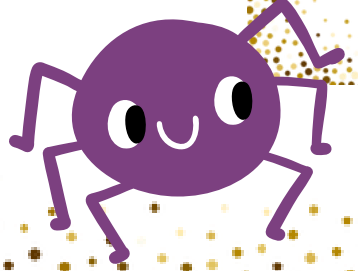


The PSFA are hosting our annual Bingo night on Friday 13th November. This is always a fun event and a great fundraiser for school.
We would be very grateful for any prizes that can be donated.
Please contact any businesses that you think might be able to help too. This would be really appreciated!



Can I welcome our new pupils, parents and guardians to school this term - It's great to see how the pupils have settled in .
Classes have been very busy this term and I would like to thank the staff for their hard work in supporting pupils in their new class routines. Can I also thank you all for supporting this and I hope you have an enjoyable half term.

Paul Leaper, Headteacher.





CLASS NEWS

We have had a fantastic half term in Spruce Class exploring our topic Hot and Cold! The children have enjoyed a wide range of exciting stories, sensory experiences and hands-on activities, developing their communication, independence and understanding of the world around them.

In English, we explored Shark in the Park on a Windy Day and Seren's Seasons. The children enjoyed sensory storytelling, sequencing activities and mark-making while developing their vocabulary and communication skills. We explored each season in detail, making lovely connections between the stories and our own experiences of the changing weather and seasons.

In Maths, we investigated addition and subtraction using practical resources and everyday objects. We also explored capacity and volume through hands-on activities involving filling, emptying and comparing containers, developing our understanding of mathematical concepts through practical experiences.

In PSHE, we celebrated what makes each of us special, explored our individual strengths and interests, and thought about the important people in our lives. We also focused on friendships and what makes a good friend. Through a range of games and activities, the children practised taking turns, sharing and communicating with one another. We have been developing our conversational skills, learning to recognise our own feelings and beginning to understand how our words and actions can affect others during play.

In Science and Geography, we explored seasonal changes and different types of weather. The children observed the weather around us, investigated how it changes throughout the year and explored the different clothes we might wear to keep ourselves comfortable in different conditions.

During RE, we enjoyed learning about the Christian story of Noah's Ark through storytelling, sensory activities and creative experiences. We explored Noah, the animals, the ark and the rainbow, thinking about the importance of caring for others and looking after our world. As part of our learning, we created our very own Spruce Class Rainbow Promise, celebrating the ways we can care for one another and our classroom community.

We have also enjoyed developing our physical skills, coordination and confidence through PE and our sessions with Super Ball Paul. The children have worked hard to develop their throwing, catching, aiming and movement skills while participating in fun and engaging activities.

Well done to all the children for their fantastic efforts, enthusiasm and achievements this half term!







CLASS NEWS

BOO!

CEDAR CLASS

We have been settling into a routine and enjoying the Eric Carle story From head to toe and matching pictures or pictures and words connected to the story along with exploring animal props and signing animals from the story. Quite a few of the children are keen on animals!

In maths we have explored big and small and sorted big and small objects, long and short and tall and short. We are all also practising our individual number targets.

Our science has been based on the human body. We enjoyed a sensory story connected to the body which explores the different senses such as smelling lavender and peppermint, bubbles and, water spray and tasting foods. We also practised naming and pointing to different body parts.

PE involved playing boccia. We have become more familiar with the rules of the game over time and are practising our underarm bowling towards a target.

Our topic was geography. We enjoyed watching a PowerPoint about our families and homes and locating where things are around school. The class enjoys accessing either the sensory room or interaction room each day as part of their routine. We also do TACPAC each Friday which helps us to relax, it involves massage to music.

Have a great half term 🙂





CLASS NEWS

BAY

We have had a wonderful term filled with fun, learning and new experiences. The children have made great progress in developing their swimming and water safety skills, building confidence and becoming more aware of how to stay safe in the water.

They have enjoyed exploring Brazil, learning about its culture and traditions, and developing their understanding of fractions and length through practical, real-life activities.

In PSHE, the children have grown in their ability to recognise and talk about their feelings, strengths and needs. They have also developed their creativity and fine motor skills through making colourful carnival masks and collages.

Our child-led communication sessions have continued to support the children in expressing their needs, making choices and sharing their interests.

Through Weekend News, the children have had opportunities to develop their communication skills, share experiences and celebrate their achievements.

Thank you for your continued support and for sharing photos of the children's wonderful adventures!

CLASS NEWS

Birch Class have settled wonderfully into their new routines and have made a positive start to the school year. We have had a fun-filled first half term, developing lots of new skills through our theme, ‘Things I Can Hear’.

We have been developing our phonological awareness by exploring and identifying environmental sounds, and everyone has done brilliantly! We have also been building our early reading and writing skills through a range of engaging activities.

In Maths, the pupils have particularly enjoyed number songs and exploring measure through our exciting Attention Autism activities.

Our Music sessions have given us lots of opportunities to explore musical instruments, experiment with different sounds and practise following instructions to play a variety of instruments. In Geography, we have enjoyed discovering and playing musical instruments from around the world.

In RE, our focus has been on Hinduism. The pupils have enjoyed exploring our theme through engaging Attention Autism activities, followed by turn-taking games to support their social skills.

Throughout the half term, we have also placed a strong emphasis on developing positive relationships and early communication skills. Regular Dance Massage, TACPAC, Intensive Interaction, PSHE and PE sessions have provided valuable opportunities for the pupils to connect with others, develop their communication and build confidence.

We are so proud of how well Birch Class have settled in and look forward to another exciting half term of learning, exploring and making progress together!









CLASS NEWS

- Willow Class - Our First Half Term!

Wow, what a busy and exciting first half term we have had in Willow Class! Our topic has been Brazil, and we have loved exploring this colourful and fascinating country through lots of different activities!

In English, we have enjoyed a range of poems and fiction texts, taking us on adventures through the Amazon Rainforest, along the beautiful Brazilian beaches and into the bustling city of Rio de Janeiro! We even created our very own postcards to send home!

In Maths, we have been busy learning all about fractions, as well as developing our measuring skills and exploring length.

Our Brazilian adventures have continued in Geography, Art, and Music too! We have explored where Brazil is in the world and compared various locations across the country. In Art, we have been busy designing, making, and evaluating our very own carnival masks, exploring patterns and different artistic techniques. We have also learnt that it is fine to change and improve our original designs along the way! Music has been a particular favourite, with lots of dressing up, dancing, and playing the steel drums! We are hoping to bring all our hard work together next week with our very own Willow Class Carnival Parade, complete with masks, music, and plenty of dancing!

And the learning hasn't stopped there! In Science, we have been exploring electricity, while in PSHE, we have been learning about when and how to ask for help.

What a fantastic start to the year! We are so proud of all the children and their enthusiasm, creativity, and hard work. We can't wait for more exciting learning adventures next half term! Well done, Willow Class!



CLASS NEWS



🍂 Cherry Class Autumn Term 1 Update: Wow, what a jam-packed half term we have had in Cherry Class!
🎉
It is hard to believe we have already reached the end of our first half term. Our nine fantastic pupils have been incredibly busy learning, creating, communicating and, of course, partying! 🥳

👑 History, Kings, Queens and Castles!
In History, we have travelled back in time to learn all about the Tudors and Stuarts. We explored coronations, discovered what Tudor houses looked like and learned lots about kings, queens and royal life. 👑🏰 We enjoyed sharing The Castle the King Built and The Great Fire of London, which inspired lots of discussion, storytelling and activities. 📚🔥

In our English work, we have been busy writing about knights and royal people, developing our ideas and showing off our fantastic writing skills. ✍️⚔️👸
🎨 Amazing Artists! We have been getting very creative in Art and DT! Our focus has been on portraits and self-portraits. We carefully explored the shapes and details of our faces and learned how to mix different colours to create skin tones. 🎨🖌️
We didn't stop at painting either! We experimented with different materials and loose parts to create some wonderfully imaginative portraits. There have certainly been some masterpieces in Cherry Class! 🖼️✨

🤟 Makaton Superstars Communication is always an important part of our learning. This half term, we have learned the Makaton signs for the different features of the face. 👀👃👄👂
We have been so pleased to see pupils beginning to remember and use signs that we have practised throughout the half term. Well done, Cherry Class! 🌟
🎈 Party Time! Now, we couldn't write about Autumn 1 without mentioning one of our biggest highlights... the parties! 🎊🎉

Cherry Class students have organised and set up an amazing THREE parties this half term! We celebrated two birthdays 🎂🎈 and finished the half term in style with our fabulous Pumpkin Party! 🎃🍂 The pupils have loved being involved in preparing and setting up these special celebrations. It has been a brilliant opportunity to work together as a class while having lots of fun along the way.
❤️

What a Half Term!

We are incredibly proud of everything Cherry Class has achieved during Autumn Term 1. From royal portraits to Makaton signs to sharing our celebrations, we certainly haven't had much time to be bored! 😂 We can't wait to see what adventures Autumn Term 2 brings!
Thank you, as always, for your continued support. We hope all our Cherry Class families have a happy, restful and fun half-term break. 🍂🎃

Christy and all the Cherry Class Team 🙂














AUTUMN TERM 1







PIC•COLLAGE

CLASS NEWS

Alder Class – Our Half-Term Learning

This half term, we have been exploring Things We Can Hear. In English, we have enjoyed sensory stories and activities that encourage us to listen to, identify and make different sounds. We have been exploring sounds in lots of different ways, alongside mark making and investigating a range of exciting resources in our tuff trays.

In Maths, we have been learning about measuring, numbers and quantities. We have enjoyed practical, hands-on activities to explore different lengths and develop our understanding of how many, using fun resources to support our learning.

In RE, we have been learning about Hinduism. We have explored Hindu worship and created our own shrine, helping us to learn about the special objects and places that are important to Hindu families.

In Computing, we have been exploring and using different digital devices. We have had opportunities to investigate how they work, explore their features and develop our confidence in using technology.

In PSHE, we have been learning about kindness through role play and sequencing stories. We have thought about kind actions and how we can show kindness to others. We even went on a special Kindness Hunt around Hillside, looking for examples of kindness in our school community!

In PE, we have been developing our basketball skills, practising handling, moving and playing with balls. We have also continued to develop our independence through Life Skills activities, including chopping, pouring and sharing. We are working hard to do more for ourselves and enjoy sitting together to share snack time with our friends.

We have also had a busy half term with our school photos and flu vaccinations, as well as a fun trip out to SENsis, where we enjoyed a different environment and exciting experiences together.

Well done, Alder Class, for all your hard work, fantastic experiences and achievements this half term! We look forward to seeing what we can learn and explore together next term.







CLASS NEWS







We have had a fantastic first half term in Saplings and the children have all settled into school life at Hillside really well.

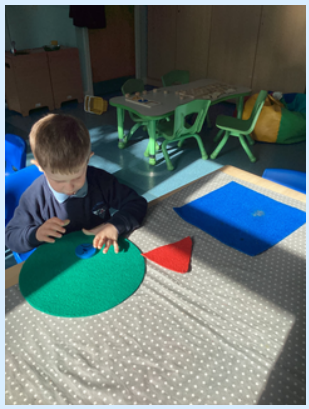
This half term, the children have been getting to know each other and talking about their families during our 'All About Me and My Family ' topic. The children have enjoyed creating portraits of themselves, expressing their likes and dislikes, trying a range of foods to identify which they like and don't like and sharing photos of their families with their friends. It has been lovely getting to know the children and finding out all about them.

In Maths, the children have explored the numbers to 5 and have been learning about 2d shapes whilst completing daily activities linked to each topic. The children created towers using a range of bricks, match numbers with different totals, explored 2d shapes and matched 2d shapes together.

Our story this half term was 'No More Room For Baby Roo'. The children really enjoyed listening to this story whilst exploring the different sensory props from the story. They particularly enjoyed sharing the sensory sock with their friends whilst pretending they were the animals from our story in Mummy Roo's pouch. The children also really enjoyed pretending to be baby kangaroos just like Baby Roo to the Kangaroo Hop song!

The children have all worked so hard this term and we are very proud of them.







CLASS NEWS



Elm have had a fantastic start to the new school year, enjoying lots of exciting activities and opportunities to develop our communication, independence and practical skills.

During our ASDAN unit in Creative Activities, we have been busy creating our own tactile book based on different environments around the world. We have explored the desert, rainforest, Arctic, ocean, volcanoes, savannah and beach, using a variety of sensory materials including sand, leaves, ice, water, slime and artificial grass. We have enjoyed exploring different textures, making choices and using materials to create our own artwork.

In English, we have continued developing our communication skills through sensory stories, songs and practical activities. We have been using pictures, symbols and communication boards to make requests, express preferences and comment on what we can see.

Our Maths activities have focused on developing early number and sorting skills. We have been matching and sorting objects, exploring colours and shapes, and practising counting through practical, hands-on activities.

As part of our ASDAN unit in the Engaging in work experience, we have been learning about different jobs and responsibilities within the classroom. We have practised completing simple tasks, following instructions and becoming more independent in our daily routines. We have also been running our weekly tuck shop, giving us opportunities to develop our communication, social and practical skills.

We have also enjoyed taking part in sensory circuits, physical activities and group sessions, helping us develop our confidence, coordination, social interaction and engagement with others.

It has been a busy and enjoyable first half term, and we are really proud of all the progress we have made. We are looking forward to continuing our learning next half term!

CLASS NEWS

BOO!

We have had a great first half term in Chestnut class, getting to know new people and getting used to our new classroom.

This half term, we have been learning all about weather and the seasons. We have explored different weather through sensory activities, play, stories and songs. We have enjoyed exploring hot and cold objects and shared if we like or dislike the hot and cold activities.

In Maths, we have explored numbers to 10 and enjoyed addition and subtraction-based songs, adding or taking away one. We have done this through songs relating to our topic. We have also taken part in activities to use full and empty vocabulary. We have taken part in water and sensory play, filling and emptying different containers.

Our stories, this half term, have included weather-based poems, 'Happy Halloween from the busy spider', 'Little Cloud', 'Noah's Ark' and 'Shark in the Park on a Windy Day'. We have enjoyed listening to the stories, exploring the props and taking part in related sensory, art, communication and writing activities.

We have developed our gross and fine motor skills through exploring different toys and activities. We have enjoyed taking part in our weekly sessions with Superball Paul and taking part in Squiggle Whilst you Wiggles, Dough Disco, TAC PAC and Story Massage sessions. We've also enjoyed our Forest School sessions with Julie









CLASS NEWS

hello AUTUMN

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

This half term, Maple Class has been learning about earning money and understanding the value of work. As part of our PHSE topic, students explored how much different items cost and worked out which jobs they needed to complete to earn enough money to buy them. They have done a fantastic job carrying out tasks such as hoovering, sweeping, cleaning windows, wiping surfaces, and washing up, developing important independence and life skills along the way.

We have also been enjoying our literacy work through The Three Little Pigs, creating our own imaginative versions of the story, including The Three Little Mermaids and the Big Bad Octopus, The Three Little Superheroes and the Big Bad Chocolate Bar, and The Three Little McFlurries and the Big Bad Big Mac! This has been a great way to develop creativity, communication, and storytelling skills and the students have written some fantastic work.

In addition, students have been learning some exciting Zumba moves, helping to build confidence and fitness, while continuing to develop their writing and typing skills across a range of activities.

We are incredibly proud of Maple Class for their hard work, creativity, and enthusiasm this half term. Well done, everyone! 🍁👏







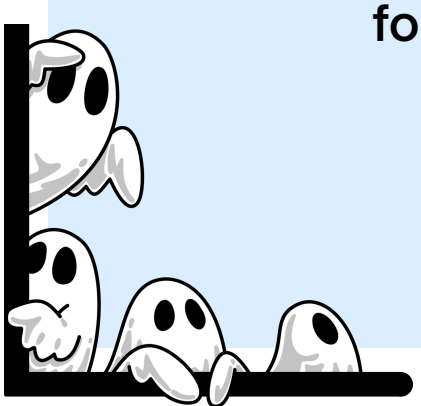




Pine Class have had a great start to the new school year! All pupils have enjoyed a mix of practical and sensory learning activities and have shown great engagement and enthusiasm. During numeracy and literacy lessons pupils have been working towards their own targets in number and shape, along with phonics, writing and reading. During our English lessons the focus has been 'All About Me', pupils have explored their likes and dislikes, comparing differences and looking at what makes them unique. In Science we have been learning body parts, how the human body grows and changes and all of the different ways we can move our bodies. Everyone has enjoyed getting to know new pupils and staff in their new classes and communication and interaction sessions have been a large part of the half term.

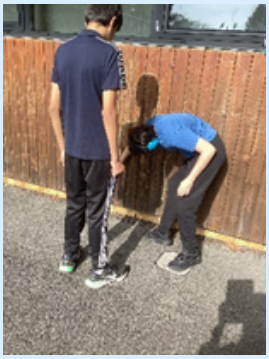
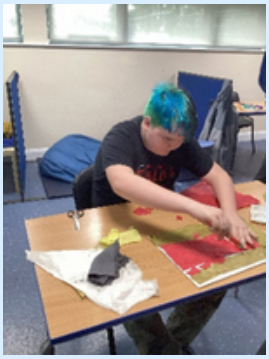
As part of the pupils ASDAN qualification we have focussed on the topic 'Looking after myself', developing pupils independence skills in personal hygiene, healthy living and overall preparation for adulthood.

We hope everyone has a lovely half term break and look forward to seeing the pupils again J







Oak Class – Autumn 1 – Newsletter

What a brilliant start to the new school year Oak Class has had! Everyone has settled back into school routines really well and we are so proud of how pupils have approached their learning. It has been a busy half term, with lots of familiar activities alongside some new challenges. In English and maths, we have continued working towards our Functional Skills at each pupil's individual level. English has included reading, writing and speaking and listening, while maths has focused on Functional Skills and exam-style practice. We have also started reading Fantastic Mr Fox as our class book.

Our practical learning has kept us busy too! In PE we have been completing sensory circuits, developing our balance, coordination and stamina, as well as thinking about how movement can help us to regulate and get ready for learning. In science we have been learning about light and sound alongside our Forest School sessions. We have continued to build our independence through life skills and enterprise sessions, including learning to use kitchen appliances safely. We have also been developing our teamwork skills through our King's Trust work and taking part in Duke of Edinburgh activities. Our weekly timetable has given everyone plenty of opportunities to practise important everyday skills too, including shopping, preparing snacks and meals, class jobs and our breakfast club.

In creative arts we have started our scrapbooking project, trying different creative activities and techniques to produce our own scrapbook pages. For some pupils, this work will also contribute towards the Skills section of their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award. We all enjoyed our trip to Ralph Livesey's in Preston, who gave us a tour of their food warehouse. It has been a fantastic and very busy start to the year. We are really proud of everything Oak Class has achieved and, most importantly, of the effort everyone has put in. We hope everyone has a lovely, restful October half term and comes back ready for another busy half term!

James and the Oak Class team.





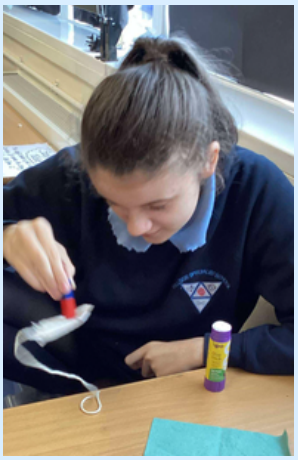


BOO!









This half term Walnut have enjoyed getting to know each other more in class and learning more about things that we like and that sometimes we like the same things and sometimes we like different things.

We have enjoyed lots of practical and creative learning as well as going outside for our learning.

In Maths we have focused on shape looking at the different properties of 2D/3D shapes and in Science we have been exploring forces and investigating how different forces affect objects moving.

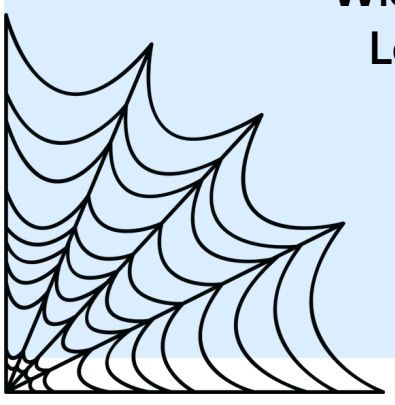
In qualification we have been looking at portraits and creating portraits of ourselves using different materials.

And in English and History we have had lots of fun learning about the Tudors and the Stuarts and the Great Fire of London. The pupils have especially enjoyed exploring some of the clothes and even making Manchette Bread.

This half term we have also started work on our Duke of Edinburgh award. We have been looking at different pieces of equipment we will be using and learning about maps and how we use them.

Wishing you all an enjoyable half term.

Louise, Fiona and the Walnut team.











🌻 The Great Sunflower Showdown! 🌻

The results are in... and we officially have some seriously impressive gardeners among us at Hillside!
🌱 A HUGE congratulations
to Rob and Hannah, who were crowned our sunflower-growing champions 🏆🌻
with Ezra hot on their heels as our very close runner-up! Well done, everyone, and we hope you enjoy your prizes! 🎁

The Winner!



A big thank you to everybody who took part. We absolutely loved seeing all your photos and watching those sunflowers reach for the sky! ☀️🌻

The competition was part of our fantastic Cherry Enterprise, alongside the pupils selling their handmade keyrings and beaded bracelets. The money raised meant that in July, each member of Cherry Class recieved exciting sensory toys and gifts.🧸✨
So, from every pupil in Cherry Class, a gigantic THANK YOU! 💚 Thank you to everyone who bought something, entered the competition, shared a photo or cheered us on.
And an extra special thank you to Kaitlyn, Freya and Iqra for all your wonderful support with each Cherry Enterprise.🌟 We couldn't have done it without you!
Best wishes, Christy 🌻💚

FUNDRAISING NEWS



Please support the PSFA











For every ticket sold 76% goes towards school and prizes. If you would like to take part please go to https://www.yourschoollottery.co.uk/ to join. £1 per ticket!



HAPPY HALLOWEEN

