



Hillside Specialist School & College

Providing exceptional education for all students

OCTOBER NEWSLETTER 2025



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Monday 3rd November
SCHOOL REOPENS
- Friday 19th December to
Monday 5th January
CHRISTMAS BREAK



Arbor

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

HAPPY HALLOWEEN

From 8th November, you will also be able to choose your child's dinner menu so we will be emailing soon with further details!



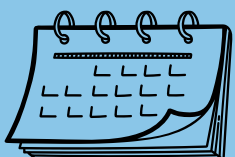
STAFF NEWS

We are pleased to welcome to the team:

Aimee Wignall TA1

Natalie Long TA1

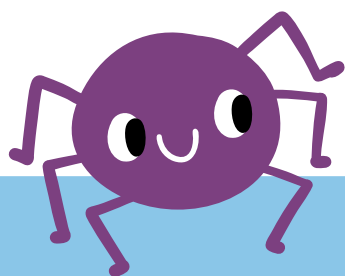
Happy Retirement to
Wendy Bain who has been at Hillside for
24 years!



REMINDER: SCHOOL REOPENS ON MONDAY 3rd NOVEMBER



Hothersall Lodge Class Trips





Autumn Attendance Update

At Hillside Specialist School and College, we know that good attendance is essential for every child's learning, social development, and overall wellbeing. Our whole-school attendance target is 95% and above.

Here's what that looks like over a school year:

- 95% attendance = 9 days missed
- 90% attendance = 19 days missed (almost 4 weeks!)
- 80% attendance = 38 days missed (over 7 weeks – more than a whole month!)

Even small amounts of absence can add up and impact progress. That's why it's so important that parents/carers and school work together to reduce absence and help our children thrive.

If your child is unwell, please report their absence via Arbor as soon as possible.

📌 For more details, visit our website: [Pupil Absences and Illnesses](#)

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](#)





The PSFA are hosting our annual Bingo night on Friday 14th 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!

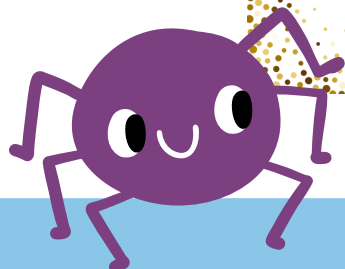


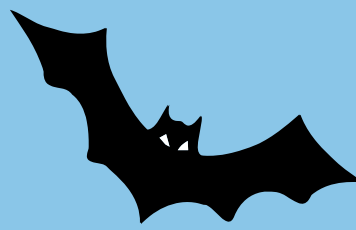
Can I welcome all of our new families from Saplings class that joined Hillside in September. It's great to see that all pupils have made an amazing start this term. It's also pleasing to see what activities all the pupils have been accessing over this half term and the progress that is being made. This is something we wish to continue through maintaining excellent attendance throughout the year.

Please get involved in our school fundraising activities by joining and supporting the PSFA. Thank you for your continued support.

Enjoy the half term week!

Paul Leaper - Headteacher





SPRUCE

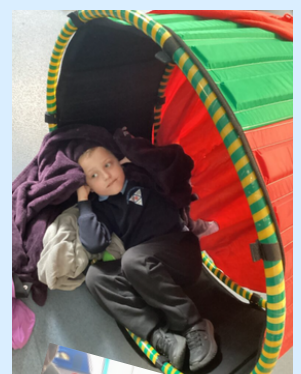
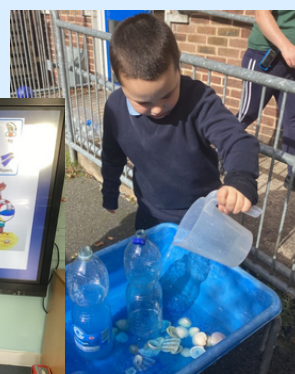
This half term, we have been very busy with our topic Me and My Friends. In Maths, we have been learning all about time - exploring how things move quickly and slowly, identifying the features of a clock, and telling the time to the hour using both analogue and digital clocks.

In English, the children have enjoyed our sensory stories 'Pip and Posy: The New Friend' and 'Sharing a Shell'. They answered key questions, took on the roles of the characters, and brought the stories to life through imaginative play and discussions. Both stories supported our topic beautifully, helping the children to explore friendship, kindness, and working together.

In RE, the children have loved learning about Jonah and the Whale. They have understood the main events in the story and created some wonderful masterpieces to represent them - including sensory ocean water bottles, an ocean scene, and their own boats and whales.

In Science, we have been learning about our favourite things and sharing information about our families and friends. We also focused on self-portraits, creating them using natural materials and playdough.

It's been such a fun and creative half term, full of learning, exploration, and smiles all around!



This half term Cedar have been enjoying 'Don't take the elephant on the bus' story and have done really well matching words and pictures connected to the story. Some of us have been practicing mark making in different media and we have worked on our individual targets.

Maths has focused on shapes. We have enjoyed finding shapes in bags and sensory trays and singing shape songs.

Science was on forces - push and pull, we took part in an experiment and sorted objects into categories.

PE has been based on sensory circuits. We have practiced standing up and down on a bench, running between cones and putting a hoop on a cone, running over hurdles and throwing a ball at a target.

In history we have enjoyed watching a Powerpoint to music of photos of us when we were younger. We have enjoyed learning about the history of transport and sorting pictures into past and present. Have a lovely half term!

This half term Alder class have had a busy and fun time exploring clothes! The children enjoyed 'The Smartest Giant in Town', learning clothing vocabulary, practicing phonics (SATPIN), 2D shapes and numbers in maths, and kindness and sharing in RE and PSHE. We developed ball skills in PE, explored materials in science, and dressed up as prehistoric Roman, Victorian, and modern-day people. We practiced life skills, visited the local charity shop, and had an adventurous afternoon at Hothersall Lodge caving, climbing and zip wiring. We also had school photos and flu jabs this term.

Have a great half term!

Alder team



CLASS NEWS



Cherry Class have all had a wonderful Autumn Term 1. Christy, Sean, Kaitlyn, Sue and Freya are all so proud of how the pupils have all settled in since September and of all their hard work this half term. We have explored the Asia topic through artwork and crafting, music and geography. We've learned Makaton Signs for colours and Asian animals, and we've painted our names in beautiful Mandarin. The highlights have been our weekly shopping trips to Aldi, cooking and baking lessons, Forest School with Julie and fun PE sessions with Super Ball Paul. We hope you all have a restful break and we look forward to next half term 😊





What a wonderful start to the academic year for Birch class. Our topic has been 'clothes', we have been reading the stories; 'Lulu's clothing', 'Alien's Love Underpants' and "What should I Wear?" said Polar Bear'. We have been working on our reading, writing, fine motor, speaking and listening skills throughout the lessons.

In maths we have focused on number and place value, 2D and 3D shapes.

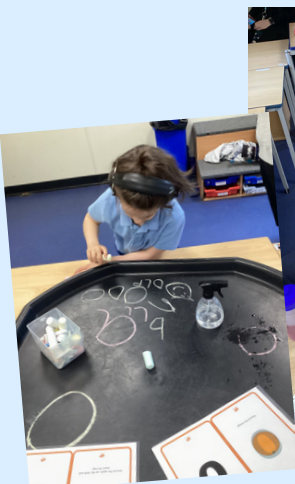
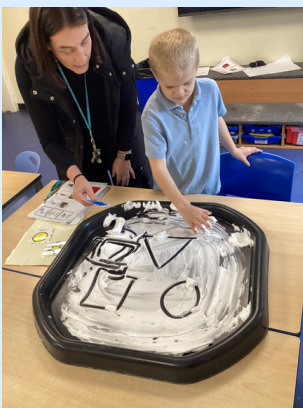
In Science we have been learning all about materials and their properties, sorting materials by their textures. During art we have been exploring materials and textures while printing and weaving.

In PSHE we have been working on building relationships and taking turns with our peers.

For our PE lessons we have been swimming which has been lots of fun!

RE has been focused all about the story 'Jesus feeds the 5000', with lots of sensory activities linked to this and in Computing we have been developing mouse skills.

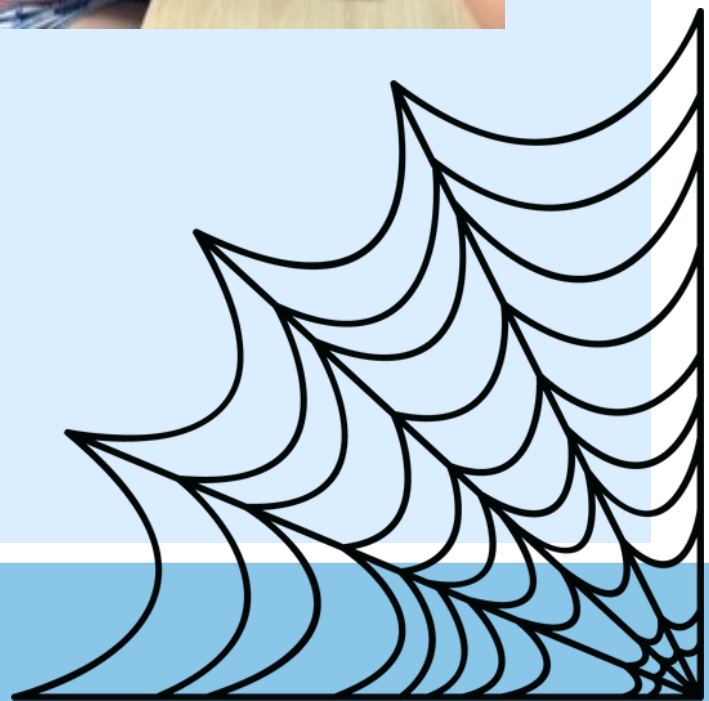
We have been developing independence each day on our daily walk around the triangle and enjoyed lots of fun, games and interaction at playtime, in the walled garden and at the swings. We also had so much fun at Hothersall Lodge. We went canoeing and everyone had a great time!



CLASS NEWS



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, shape, and measurement, along with phonics, writing and reading. During science pupils have enjoyed looking at forces, all pupils particularly enjoyed a lesson where they could explore different forces whilst incorporating the sensory aspect of paint. During computing pupils have been looking at patterns and sorting data, along with exploring typing on keyboards. As part of the pupils ASDAN accreditation we have been looking at relationships, sessions contributing to this have involved structured and unstructured play, sensory and communication sessions for pupils to explore with staff and each other. Our overall theme this half term has been Transport. Pupils have enjoyed sensory stories involving going on journeys using different forms of transport and learning about the history of transport. We look forward to continuing what has started out as a great year after the half term break 😊





Maple class have had a great first half term and have been busy from week 1! We have been accessing the local supermarket and buying food to make our daily meals. We have started some onsite and offsite work experience related to gardening, helping the site supervisors collect the leaves from around the site, using brushes and wheel barrows, and visiting Let's Grow, collecting apples to make apple juice and helping look after the plants. We have been learning about the solar system in science and making our own planets that glow in the dark. We have been putting out counting and addition skills to use in maths, finding objects around the college and counting them and learning functional words that have been supporting our kitchen skills for our AQA units. We have also started our rock band rehearsals for our Christmas performance, the students have absolutely loved being able to play on drums, guitars, bass guitars and keyboards and have all grown in confidence when singing on the microphone! We hope you can come and watch us perform at Christmas!



CLASS NEWS



Oak Class have had a great start to the year. It's been lovely for all pupils and staff to get to know each other and for our new pupils in college to settle into routine.

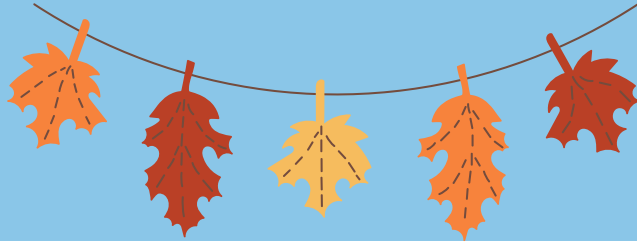
We've all been working hard towards our Functional Skills in Maths and English. Our Entry 3 – Level 2 group have been building up their independent study skills, working towards the exam specification on a website called 'Pass Functional Skills'. Our Entry 1&2 group have been working on money skills, working out change from a specific amount. As well as looking at exam style writing questions and how to answer these using a range of sentence starters. Some of the books we have been reading this term are: 'The Boy in Striped Pyjamas', 'Around the World in 80 Days' and 'The Railway Children'.

In science we've been learning about hedgehogs, hibernation and their environment – we've made plans to make some hedgehog houses and monitor some hedgehogs through their hibernation period. We're going to build these soon in Forest Schools. It's been great to see the progress everyone has been making in PE with our table tennis sessions – over the weeks we have been building up our accuracy skills and everyone has engaged well.

We've been working on a number of PDP modules, such as comparing brands & prices in PSHE, expanding our breakfast enterprise project and in life skills we have been practicing different elements of a roast dinner in preparation for our Christmas lunch plans.

I hope you all have a restful half term holiday,
James and Oak Class staff team.





Wow! What a quick and busy first half term it has been! Willow Class has had lots of fun diving into the fascinating world of the Vikings.

We've enjoyed some fantastic stories, including, 'The Viking Who Liked Icing' and 'How to Train Your Dragon', as well as our funny class poem 'Viking Porridge'! The children have loved exploring Viking life through stories, drama, and creative writing - imagining what it might have been like to live as a Viking warrior or to sail across the sea on a longship.

Our Viking topic has also inspired our Art and History lessons. We've been learning about Viking homes, ships, food, and clothing. The class have especially enjoyed hands-on projects - from building shields and designing Viking jewellery to tasting (and smelling!) some traditional Viking-style foods.

In Maths, we've been focusing on Shape and Place Value. Through practical activities, games, and problem-solving challenges, the children have been developing their understanding of number, counting, and how numbers work together. Using shape hunts, construction materials, and puzzles, we've explored 2D and 3D shapes in a fun and active way - making learning both visual and meaningful.

In Science, we've been busy learning all about Forces. The children have explored pushes and pulls, testing how far different objects can travel and investigating how surfaces and materials affect movement. We've also started to explore magnets, discovering which materials are magnetic and experimenting with magnetic strength through exciting investigations and predictions.

It's been a term full of energy and movement in PE too! The children have been developing their ball skills through basketball, ten pin bowling, Velcro catch, and aiming games. They've been working brilliantly as a team, showing fantastic co-operation and enthusiasm in our invasion games and group challenges.

It's been a wonderful start to the year - full of creativity, teamwork, and curiosity. We hope you all have a fantastic and restful half-term break. We can't wait for more adventures when we return!

Kelly and the Willow Class Team



What a great start to the new school year we have had in Chestnut Class! The children have all settled back in to school really well and have enjoyed getting to know their new classmates and class team.

In Maths we have had lots of fun exploring numbers and finding out about one and lots. We have enjoyed exploring multi-sensory items to begin to recognise one object and lots of objects. We have also had lots of excitement learning about time - looking at day and night. The dark tent and light projector has been a great hit with the children.

Our Computing topic has been all about learning about everyday items that use a computer. The children have been investigating what happens when you press a switch on a variety of objects - we have really loved playing shop with the till.

Our RE story "Jonah and the Whale" has taken us on a journey with Jonah learning about listening to God and how God teaches us about forgiveness. In the story, the class have had fun playing with water exploring the boat Jonah hid on and the whale that saved Jonah.

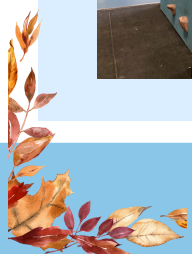
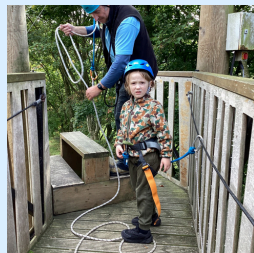
The children have really enjoyed listening to and taking part in our English story - The Chestnut Tree. We have enjoyed exploring multi-sensory items to bring the story to life and then beginning to match pictures and objects from the story to symbols. The children have really enjoyed hunting for different insects from the story in our multi-sensory trays.

Through our Science and PHSE lessons, we have been getting to know our friends and how to be a good friend. We have loved our turn taking activities, playing with different toys, rolling the ball to each other and blowing bubbles - and popping them :) We have also started to learn about expressing our opinion on what we like and dislike.

In September the children had a fantastic time at Hothersall Lodge! They enjoyed lots of new challenges including having a go on the climbing wall and exploring the tree top trail.

It has been a fantastic half term and we are very proud of all the children and how hard they have been working. Have a lovely half-term break.

Fiona and the Chestnut Class team



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 number 1, looked at primary and secondary colours and learnt about 2D shapes whilst completing daily activities linked to each topic. The children created towers using a range of bricks, sorted different coloured balls into the correct buckets 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 painting their favourite animals from the story and 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.





What a wonderful start to the year we've had in Bay Class! The children have settled beautifully, forming amazing new friendships and diving into learning with enthusiasm and smiles.

This term, we've travelled back in time to the Viking age — exploring their daring adventures across stormy seas, discovering what life was like in their villages, and even dressing up to bring history to life! Our sensory play sessions have been full of textures, sounds, and colours, making learning hands-on and exciting.

In English, we've explored a multisensory world of stories — from acting out tales to creating our own imaginative twists. A real love of reading is growing in every corner of our classroom!

Attention Autism sessions have been a huge hit — messy, marvellous, and full of laughter!

From glittery explosions to foamy fun, the children have loved every minute.

In Maths, we've been busy recognising numbers all around us — through songs, games, and practical activities. Whether counting Viking treasures or hunting for numbers in our classroom, the children have been building their confidence and having lots of fun.

Science has been all about forces! We've experimented with pushing, pulling, and rolling to see how different objects move. There's been plenty of hands-on exploring — racing cars down ramps, testing how far we can make them go, and discovering what makes things speed up or slow down.

In Art, we've become sculptors — moulding, shaping, and building using clay and other materials. The children have loved feeling the textures and creating their own 3D masterpieces (some rather impressive Viking helmets, too!).

Our PSHE learning has been centred on kindness and friendship. We've talked about how to be a good friend, shared positive affirmations, and practised helping each other in and out of the classroom. Watching the children grow in confidence, compassion, and teamwork has been truly heart-warming.

On the 25th September Bay class went to Hothersall Lodge to take part in a open canoe session. The pupils managed the change and all enjoyed taking part in the activity in their own way. A great afternoon with some of the pupils asking to go again!

As we look ahead to next term, we can't wait for more adventures, discoveries, and creative fun. Thank you for your continued support — together, we're helping every child in Bay Class to shine!



Three colored balls (red, purple, and yellow) with numbers 5, 6, and 7 respectively, arranged in a triangular pattern.

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!

