



Hillside Specialist School & College

Providing exceptional education for all students

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER 2026

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Thursday 12th February
LAST DAY OF TERM
- Friday 13th February
INSET Day
- Monday 23rd February
SCHOOL REOPENS
- Monday 30th March to Friday 10th
April EASTER BREAK



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



Congratulations!

To Sam for completing your
NVQ Level 3 for Teaching
Assistant – Well done!

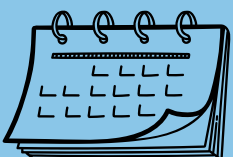
HAPPY HOLIDAYS

STAFF NEWS

**Goodbye & Good Luck
to:**

Marie Tuke

Becky Dexter



REMINDER:
SCHOOL REOPENS ON MONDAY 23rd FEBRUARY



Spruce Class

Our topic 'Out of This World' has truly captured the children's imaginations! We have been focusing on our class sensory stories 'The Solar System' and 'Meet the Planets', which have helped us learn lots of wonderful scientific facts about space. The children have loved exploring the planets and remembering key information about each one.

As part of our learning, the children went on a very special space mission in their own rockets, where they even got to try "space food"! They also designed and made their own space helmets, showing great creativity and enthusiasm for our topic.

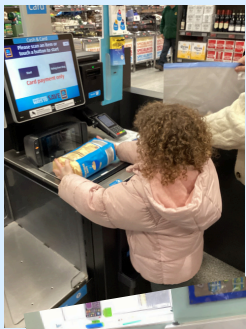
In PSHE, our focus has been on feelings. The children have really enjoyed our story 'The Colour Monster', and each week we have explored a different emotion. It has been lovely to see the children growing in confidence when talking about their feelings and recognising emotions in themselves and others.

In addition to our space learning, we have been exploring Chinese New Year and have created some fabulous artwork linked to the celebrations.

In Maths, we have been learning all about money. The children have been matching coins, naming them and sorting silver and copper coins. They have also been practising adding different coins together to find a total. We put our knowledge to the test with a real-life shopping trip to Aldi, where the children used their own money to make a purchase. It has been wonderful to see their confidence grow each week as they used shopping lists and tried both the self-service checkout and paying a cashier.

We have also loved our sessions with Super Ball Paul in PE this half term. The children have played some great games, practised taking turns and developed their listening skills. They have had an absolute ball!

We are so proud of how the children continue to shine in their learning!





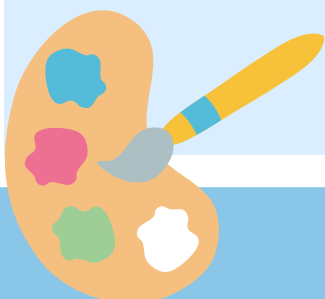
This half term Cedar class loved visiting a cafe a couple of times as part of their ASDAN award. We have been learning about different job roles in the cafe.

In PE we have continued to use scarves to dance then warmed up by moving in different ways, practising balances. We have then split into two groups and practised different skills such as jumping over a spot with two feet together, walking along a bench and jumping off then practising a long jump. The other group have been practising stepping up and down on a bench, placing hoops on a cone and throwing beanbags into a container.

Our English and geography have been based on India. We have enjoyed matching pictures and words to the story, tasting naan and poppadoms, smelling floral scents and exploring props such as animal figurines. We have also looked at different types of buildings and compared buildings in Longridge and India.

Maths this half term has focused on time. We have looked at what a routine is and how routines are different during the week and weekend.

In PSHE we have learnt about internet safety and what information is public and private. We then moved on to chance and risk.
Have a great half term holiday!



CLASS NEWS



During the first half of the Spring term, pupils in Chestnut class have been developing their understanding of number value, grouping, and early division in Maths, alongside learning number bonds to 10 through practical activities.

In English, pupils have explored their class story through a range of sensory-based activities. They have also been developing their understanding of Colourful Semantics, while increasing their independence with mark making and early letter formation.

In Science and History, pupils have enjoyed learning about space through creative crafts and sensory exploration. Pupils have also been developing greater independence when transitioning between activities and moving to different locations across the school.

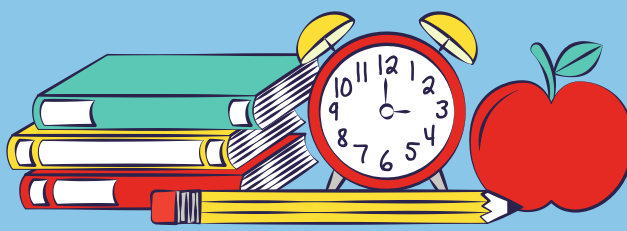
Pupils have particularly enjoyed taking part in Super Ball Paul's sessions on Friday mornings, where they have been developing a range of ball skills and teamwork. In Outdoor Learning, pupils have taken part in a variety of beanbag games, continuing to build their understanding of positioning and spatial awareness. Overall, this has been a very successful half term, with positive progress and development seen across all pupils.



PIC•COLLAGE



CLASS NEWS



Cherry Class have had a fantastic half term. We've been creating and interpreting different charts; building big pictograms with animals, interpreting chart data and also making graphs on the computer, like true little statisticians - we've been so busy each day that even our pictograms needed a lie-down! Our Colourful Semantics work has been wonderful to watch. Each week, the children's sentences have been getting longer, brighter and more descriptive!

As part of our ASDAN module, we've been telling each other about our favourite places, taking photos of them and reporting on why they're so special. We loved hearing all the thoughtful reasons why they loved their special spots - from cosy bedrooms at home to favourite corners of school. In PSHE and RE, we've been learning about kindness, friendship, and how to be a truly "good friend." We explored the story of 'The Good Samaritan', which sparked lovely discussions about helping others - and we've already seen lots of kind moments in class. Our KS3 students in Cherry class also had a brilliant adventure at Brockholes Nature Reserve, where they explored, discovered and possibly startled a duck or two (no ducks were harmed). Thank you, as always, for your support, positivity and partnership. We wish you a restful, happy half term - and we can't wait to see what wonderful things Cherry Class will get up to next!



CLASS NEWS



In Birch Class, we have enjoyed a very hands-on, practical and sensory half term. Within our theme of Spain, pupils have loved our Spanish sensory story, which took us on a journey to Spain to explore flamenco dancing, music-making and the seaside, while developing comprehension and communication skills. We also took part in “squiggle while you wiggle” sessions, focusing on pre-writing movements inspired by Spanish dancing. Pupils have completed a range of arts and crafts activities linked to the Spanish artist Gaudí, and in Geography we explored the wonderful country of Spain and its rich heritage.

Within our English and Communication sessions, we have had weekly focus sessions on reading, writing and phonics. Pupils also took part in communication sessions in the hall, developing skills in engaging with peers and taking turns.

In Maths, we have been focusing on position and direction, as well as fractions and sharing equally. Pupils have engaged extremely well in these sessions and made excellent progress.

In Science, our topic has been seasonal changes. We have enjoyed a sensory story all about the different seasons and completed a range of activities linked to this theme.

We have also been enjoying our weekly outdoor learning sessions, exploring our environment and taking part in sensory tuff tray activities linked to both Science and Art.

In PSHE, we have focused on personal hygiene, developing independence in oral hygiene, handwashing and face washing.

We have been very fortunate to attend our external provider ‘Superball Paul’ PE sessions, which have been full of fun, energy and laughter.

In RE, our sessions have focused on Islam and the story ‘The Crying Camel’. Pupils have enjoyed the story and completed activities linked to this.



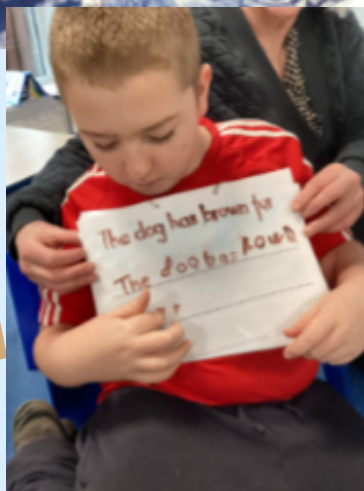
CLASS NEWS



Spring 1 complete! Pine Class have had a lovely start to the Spring term. This half term we have had a big focus on sensory and physical wellbeing as part of the pupils ASDAN Supporting Aspirations module. The pupils have enjoyed walks around the school grounds, using the trampolines and swings, sensory circuits, interaction and sensory room and weekly swimming sessions. As well as this the pupils have also been able to develop their shared attention skills, group work skills, and communication skills through engaging in sensory stories and Attention Autism sessions.

Fine and Gross motor has also been a big part of this half term, with pupils developing their independence in fine motor activities such as threading, jigsaws and writing. Our curriculum topic this half term has been India, we have explored Indian music, foods, spices and traditions. Each pupil has made great progress towards their individual targets. We hope everyone has a lovely half term break!

From Ebony & Pine Class Staff 😊



CLASS NEWS



A short half term, but filled with lots of fun activities in Oak class!

We've been cracking on with our exam studies for both English and Maths, which start after the Easter Holidays – exam dates to be sent home soon. Our PDP modules have included a furniture upcycling project with Julie on a Tuesday afternoon, comparing local and online shopping brands in PSHE and of course our weekly breakfast sandwich enterprise which is proving very popular as of late! We've also started our weekly swimming sessions at Nicks Swim School – which everyone is really engaging in. We're continuing these through till the Easter holidays. Oak class have welcomed guest speakers into class to give us some career talks, including an Avanti train driver and a Hillside parent who has been part of the Navy.

Have a lovely and restful half term break.

James and the Oak Class team.



Alder class have had a busy and enjoyable half term with lots of exciting learning experiences!

We continued exploring our class text 'Ferdinand the Bull', developing fine motor skills through mark-making, pencil control and careful colouring activities.

In Maths, the children practised counting using objects linked to the story, including flowers, bulls, bees and hats. A highlight was our fun "hat hunt," where the children searched for and counted silly hats around the classroom.

In Geography, our focus was Spain. The children created sensory maps and explored different landscapes such as beaches, mountains, rivers and vineyards using hands-on sensory trays.

Art lessons included creating Gaudí-inspired collages using natural materials and designing imaginative houses with unusual shapes.

In Science, we explored the seasons through sensory activities, including spring planting, a summer beach sensory bottle, an autumn leaf wreath and a winter sensory tray with ice and animals.

In PSHE, we continued learning about self-care and hygiene. We also enjoyed regular visits to All Thrive to support gross motor skills, role play and sensory development.

The children have been enthusiastic and engaged. It has been lovely to see their confidence grow throughout the half term.



CLASS NEWS



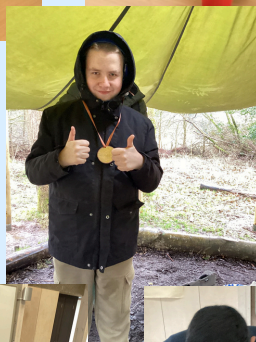
Walnut have had another exciting half term. The pupils have really enjoyed swimming and have learnt so much in these sessions. In Maths we have been extending our learning in capacity and temperature while also putting our number skills into addition and subtraction.

In English this term our book was "Sharing a Shell". During this unit we looked at identifying characters and settings. We looked at the feelings of the characters and compared their feelings at different points of the story. We sequenced the story and we focussed on using capital letters, finger spaces and full stops when sequencing sentences.

In our creative curriculum, our topic has been coasts, rivers and water. We have studied features of coasts and waters and compared the difference of the two in Geography. In DT we looked at different games you might play on a beach and created our own beach game.

In science we looked at electricity focusing on what objects need mains or batteries, safety around electricity and sorted objects into groups showing how the electricity is used.

Walnut class attended a trip to Brockholes in February. We enjoyed taking part in activities such as bird watching, nature walk, den building, minibeast hunting and arts and crafts. The children really got stuck in and enjoyed the day.



This term Bay class has been packed with fun, discovery and lots of brilliant learning!

We enjoyed a special visit from the local mosque, where the children explored different clothing and foods and asked some fantastic questions.

In PE, we put our balancing skills to the test, wobbling, concentrating and improving every week.

English lessons took us on a magical adventure as we dived into the story of Aladdin, while in Maths we became problem-solvers, exploring fractions and positional language.

In Science, we turned into animal experts, learning how to care for animals and discovering where they live and in Art we got creative, making eye-catching patterns using a variety of resources and techniques.

It has been a joyful, busy term and we are so proud of all the enthusiasm and smiles along the way! 🎨📚✨

We have been very busy in Elm class this half term with our overall theme being Magic and Potions. We have been following the Sensory Story of 'Wizard of Oz' for our Engaging with the World Personal Progress unit.

For our Getting out and about Personal Progress unit we have been practicing exchanging money in shops and choosing items we would like to buy.

For Maths we have been learning about weights and measures and have been practicing this in our Preparation for Adulthood lessons cooking and baking through measuring out ingredients using weighing scales.

For our ASDAN Personal progress unit in Getting on with other people we have taken part in group games and activities, playing Boccia with our peers, Dance Massage, group music sessions and Tacpac.

We have also been developing our communication skills in our Sensory communication sessions showing preferences, making choices and communicating these using PECS or Theme boards.



CLASS NEWS



Wow! What a quick and busy term it has been! Willow Class has dived headfirst into an exciting half term exploring our topic, 'Water, Water Everywhere.'

In English, the children have enjoyed some splash-tacular stories, including 'Tiddler', 'Splish Splash', 'Who's in the Water?' and 'How to Catch a Mermaid'. They have been busy honing their handwriting and story-writing skills, while also developing their reading abilities through guided reading and phonics activities.

Our exploration of water didn't stop there! In Geography, Music and DT, the pupils got hands on with learning about the water cycle, created water inspired sounds with instruments and designed and tested their very own boats to see which materials worked best.

In Maths, we've been exploring fractions, from understanding the idea of sharing to identifying and writing simple fractions. We also revisited position and direction, making sure our mathematicians can navigate the world around them!

This term has been full of energy and movement too! The children have loved their swimming lessons, working hard on individual targets to build confidence, improve technique and develop water safety skills. Alongside this, they've been enjoying sensory circuits and obstacle courses, keeping active and having fun.

We hope you all have a wonderful half-term break and come back ready for more exciting adventures in Willow Class! Kelly and the Willow class team.



CLASS NEWS



We have had a lovely half-term in Saplings learning about different festivals including Chinese New Year and trying new and healthy foods.

In Literacy, the children have been listening to 'The Gingerbread Man' and 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. The children really enjoyed trying the different foods from the story including, apples, oranges, pears, plums and ginger. They then had a go at making some super recipes including smoothies, biscuits, cakes and gingerbread men using these ingredients. It was lots of fun and very delicious!

In maths, the children have been busy working on their numbers and counting. They counted gingerbread men and decorated them using the correct amount of gems needed for each. The children have also been learning about 2d shapes and have been creating repeating patterns and pictures with them.

The children have loved getting creative in the afternoons and have created some beautiful artwork including junk model caterpillars, butterflies with symmetrical patterns on their wings and their very own gingerbread men.

A great half-term with lots of super progress!





SWIMMING GALA



Last week Hillside were invited to participate in the Lancashire School Games swimming gala.

Pupils from KS3 and 4 were selected and raced against other Lancashire Special Schools. Our pupils demonstrated outstanding effort, determination and sportsmanship throughout the event. Each swimmer gave their very best, showing great confidence and teamwork in every race. It was wonderful to see them support and encourage one another, as well as celebrate the achievements of others. We are extremely proud of all our pupils for representing Hillside so positively and making the day such a great success.



It's great to see how busy classes have been over this short half term, as pupils continue to make progress towards their targets, accreditation and qualifications.

I would like to thank all of the pupils and the staff for their hard work over the half term. We are also all very proud of our pupils' achievements in representing Hillside at the Swimming Gala.

Thank you for your continued support.

Enjoy the half term week.

Paul Leaper - Headteacher.

School will re-open on Monday 23rd February



Dates for the Diary

2026 EVENTS

Saturday 27th June
Summer Fair

Friday 13th November



Saturday 12th December
Christmas Fair

We really appreciate all the support!



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