



Hillside Specialist School & College

Providing exceptional education for all students



MAY NEWSLETTER 2026



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Friday 22nd May
LAST DAY OF TERM
- Monday 1st June
SCHOOL REOPENS
- Saturday 27th June
Summer Fair - All welcome to attend!
- Thursday 16th July
LAST DAY OF TERM
- Friday 17th July - INSET Day
- Monday 20th July - INSET Day
- Thursday 3rd September
SCHOOL REOPENS



Arbor

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

STAFF NEWS

We are pleased to welcome to the team:

Hannah Fry (TA1)
Iqra Khan (TA1)
Lianne Dewhurst (TA1)

Goodbye & Good Luck to:

Kaci Lakeland

PRESTON
COLLEGE

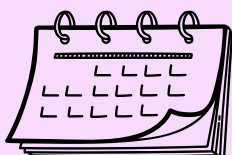
CONGRATULATIONS

Hillside Specialist School and College

INDUSTRY PLACEMENT EMPLOYER OF
THE YEAR - EDUCATION & CHILDCARE

HIGHLY COMMENDED

EXCEPTIONAL APPRENTICE
& EMPLOYER AWARDS 2026



REMINDER:

SCHOOL REOPENS ON MONDAY 1st JUNE

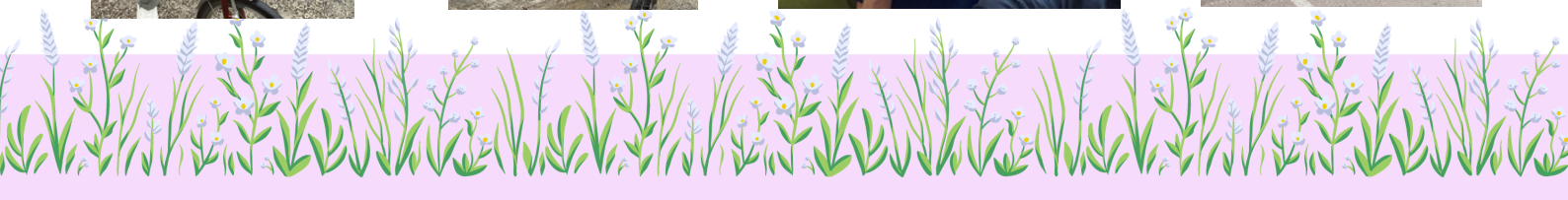
Bendrigg

Residential Trip



The students had a fantastic time at Bendrigg on their residential trip! They took part in a wide range of exciting activities, including caving, archery and zip wiring. It was a wonderful opportunity for them to develop independence, resilience and a sense of adventure.

A huge thank you to all the staff involved, both from Hillside and Bendrigg, for making it such a memorable and successful experience for everyone!



SCHOOL NEWS

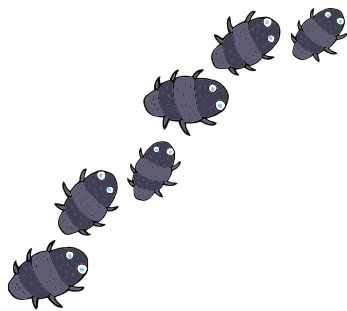


Our school community has gone above and beyond - together we've walked an impressive 648.5 miles, Amy, HLTA, ran a half marathon 🏃🏃💥 and we've collectively raised an incredible £1,115.00! 🙌🙌

Brockhole Nature Reserve



A fab day for pupils from Key Stage 2 exploring nature with their senses as well as some bug hunting.



SCHOOL NEWS



BREAKTIME *Multi-Activity* CAMPS

Designed to offer
SEND children
engaging &
enjoyable
experiences.



Scan to book!

EVERY SATURDAY 9AM-2PM

📍 HILLSIDE SPECIALIST SCHOOL

📍 PR3 3XB

📍 WANT TO SEE A SESSION?

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experiences,
community!



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CLASS NEWS

What a busy and exciting half term we have had in Spruce! The children have thoroughly enjoyed our topic of Spring and Life Cycles.

In English, we explored our sensory story 'The Cautious Caterpillar'. The children engaged brilliantly with the story, learning about the characters and focusing on description. We also introduced key vocabulary such as nouns, adjectives and verbs, and the children did very well in understanding and using this new language.

In Maths, we have been learning all about shape. We began with a fun shape hunt, where the children enjoyed finding both 2D and 3D shapes around the environment and learning their names. We then moved on to exploring their properties, including sides, faces, vertices and edges.

In PSHE, we focused on how people who are close to us care for us. Each week had a different focus, including handwashing, cleaning our teeth and learning about toileting. The children engaged really well with these important life skills.

Art has been a highlight this half term! The children explored a range of media, including bubble painting, sponge painting, paintbrush work and using natural resources such as leaves. They loved being creative and trying new techniques.

In RE, we learned about the story of 'Bilal and the Butterfly' and created our own life cycles of a butterfly. The children did a fantastic job and showed great understanding.

We have also been very lucky to visit All Thrive this half term. The children embraced these visits and thoroughly enjoyed exploring the physical and sensory equipment. It has been wonderful to see their confidence grow in this environment.

Thank you for your continued support. Have a wonderful half term!



CLASS NEWS

In Birch class we have been focusing on the theme 'water water everywhere'. We have been reading our sensory story and had lots of fun exploring the water activities whilst building on our comprehension and writing skills.

In maths we have been focusing on number and capacity linking to the water theme. We have continued the water theme throughout science when we have been learning about temperature.

We have spent lots of time outdoors, taking part in water activities, visits to the park and low ropes within school.

In PSHE we have been learning about public and private and in RE we have learnt about Judaism.

Our art sessions have been very messy; we have been exploring printing with different materials.



We have been very busy in Elm class this half term with our overall theme being 'About in the community'. We have been following the Sensory Story of 'People who help us' 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 and also eating and drinking places such as cafes, McDonalds and a Fish and chip shop. For Maths we have been learning about Geometry and have been practicing this in our Preparation for Adulthood lessons by communicating and following instructions to make a shape collage and practicing these skills in class.

For our ASDAN Personal progress unit in Getting on with other people we have been practicing making varied comments in our lessons to develop our communication and interaction with others. We have also been participating in group activities, playing games, developing turn taking and interaction with others. We have also been involved in whole school and college activities running our Friday tuck shop.



CLASS NEWS

Oak class has had their busiest half term yet! We are so proud of all our pupils, as it's been exam season mixed in with the accreditation deadline, but everyone has done so well. Everyone has tried their best with their exams, with the extra practice and change in routines for some. We've also completed our accreditations in PDP Bronze or Gold, The Kings Trust PDE award and for some, Personal Progress. We even had a visit from our Kings Trust advisor, who came in to deliver a session about profitable enterprise projects. She also promised to say a big hello from Hillside to the King when she sees him in the summer! Everyone has been enjoying our weekly life skills and cooking sessions, where we've been following instructions to make products such as milkshakes, pizza and cookies. We've been focusing on our skill in using measuring equipment such as scales, jugs and measuring spoons.

In forest schools we have been helping look after the vegetable plot and the polytunnel, as well as designing and making cardboard models of animal habitats – including moles, giraffes and cows to name a few!

Everyone enjoyed the Oliver Twist performance that came to visit at the end of April – it was great to see the pupils getting involved in some audience participation. Some of us also had a wonderful residential trip to Bendrigg for three days and two nights. Lots of fun was had, if not a few sleepless nights. Thank you to all that made it possible.

Have a lovely and restful May half term,
James and the Oak Class team.



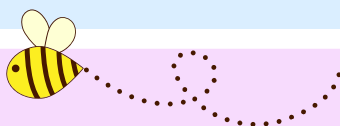
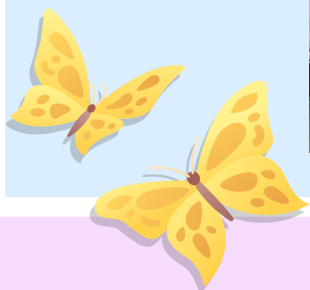
CLASS NEWS

We have had such a busy and fun half term in Alder with lots of exciting sensory learning! In literacy, we explored rain poetry through sounds, rhythm, songs, and sensory activities. We also enjoyed learning about rhyming words through stories and games. Our class story was *There's a Shark in My Bath*, which pupils loved joining in with using props, sounds, and water play. Communication sessions continued to focus on core words such as “want,” “yes,” and “no,” alongside phonics and Attention Autism activities.

In maths, we explored capacity and number through lots of practical activities and water play. Pupils enjoyed pouring, filling, and emptying containers while learning about full and empty.

We also had great fun with fishing and shark-themed counting games to support number recognition and early maths skills.

In RE, we learnt about the story of Noah's Ark through sensory storytelling and creative activities. In computing, we explored media and film using iPads and interactive technology. In geography and art, we learnt about our place in the world and used our senses to create imaginative artwork. PSHE and science focused on caring for the environment, alongside continuing to build independence skills through community outings and personal care activities.



CLASS NEWS



It has been an incredibly busy and rewarding half-term for Maple Class! We have spent a lot of time stepping out of the classroom and into the heart of our local community to put our learning into practice.

Out and About in the Community

Our community visits have been a huge hit. From the checkout aisles at Asda and Aldi to ordering a treat at McDonald's and the Stonebridge chip shop, the students have been working hard on their independence. These trips are about much more than just a snack; they are vital opportunities for our students to:

Practice Communication: Speaking clearly with shop assistants and servers.

Make Choices: Deciding what they would like and expressing their preferences.

Real-Life Maths: Using money in real-world settings and understanding the process of an exchange.

We also reached new heights - literally - during our trip to rock climbing, where the students showed fantastic bravery and physical coordination.

Adventure Awaits at Bendrigg

A group of our students embarked on an unforgettable residential stay at Bendrigg. It was a break away filled with adrenaline and "firsts." Our brave adventurers took part in:

Caving and Climbing: Navigating new environments and overcoming challenges.

Archery and Cycling: Developing focus, balance, and fine motor skills.

The Fire Pit: Gathering together to reflect on their day and enjoy the great outdoors.

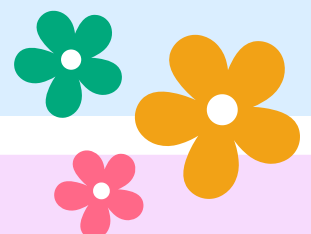
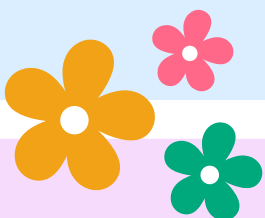
The resilience shown by the students during these activities was truly inspiring!

Friendship and Fun at Home

Back at school, we have been focusing on our social skills. Through roleplay, we've been exploring the qualities of a "good friend" versus a "bad friend." It's been wonderful to see the students practicing kindness, sharing, and understanding how their actions affect others.

To top it all off, we've continued to have a splashing good time during our weekly swimming sessions at Nick's pool. It's the perfect way to build confidence in the water while having plenty of fun with our peers.

Well done, Maple Class, for a fantastic half-term of growth and adventure!



CLASS NEWS

This half term in Willow Class our topic has been Industry, and the children have been busy exploring the exciting world of different jobs, products and services around us. Through stories, computing, creative work, role play and hands-on activities, they have explored a range of industries while developing a wide variety of skills across the curriculum. The children have shown fantastic curiosity and enthusiasm throughout the topic and have loved learning about how different industries help our everyday lives.

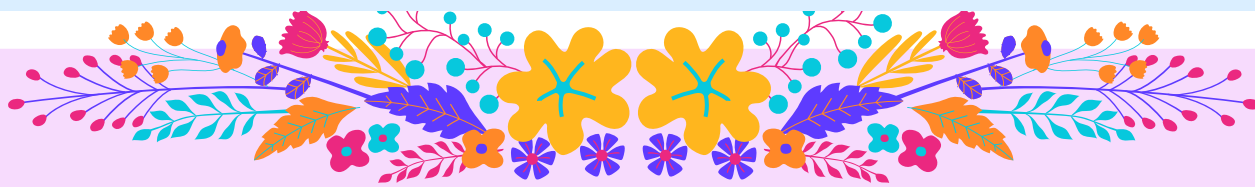
In English, we have enjoyed exploring a range of engaging texts including 'When I Grow Up', where we discussed different jobs and linked them to industries, as well as the much-loved stories 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' and 'The Little Red Hen'. The children especially enjoyed discussing the characters, making predictions and sharing their favourite parts of the stories. We explored themes such as teamwork, hard work and creativity, linking these ideas back to our topic.

Throughout these texts, the children have been developing their story writing skills by practising sentence structure, using capital letters and full stops correctly, building confidence when spelling CVC words and improving communication skills through discussions and storytelling activities. We have also worked hard on developing vocabulary and encouraging the children to share their ideas clearly and confidently.

In Maths, we have been exploring data handling and, more recently, weight. The children have begun to understand that data is information and have enjoyed collecting their own data through fun class investigations. They have practised making choices, categorising information and interpreting what the data tells us. The children have developed their understanding of tally charts, bar charts and pictograms and have enjoyed discussing the results they gathered together.

To make our learning practical and fun, we carried out different weighing activities using balancing scales and classroom objects. The children enjoyed estimating which objects would be heavier or lighter and comparing different items. They also loved collecting class data linked to favourite foods, pets and colours, turning maths into exciting real-life learning opportunities.

Our topic learning continued into Design Technology and Computing. In Design Technology, the children developed their understanding of products and the journey products take from being designed to being made and sold. The children researched key rings, explored different designs and discussed who their product would be for. They then designed and created their own key rings before completing the process by packaging and "delivering" their finished products. The children showed fantastic creativity and took great pride in their work.



CLASS NEWS

In Computing, we explored films and film making, becoming our own little film crews! Each week we focused on different industries such as food, transport and construction. The children thoroughly enjoyed role playing different jobs while learning how films are created. They practised using cameras and recording clips before gathering their footage together to create small movies. It was wonderful to see their confidence and teamwork grow throughout the project.

In Science, we have been exploring plants by learning and recapping the different parts of a plant and what plants need to grow and survive. The children carried out their own plant experiments, investigating different growing conditions including no water, water and sunlight, no sunlight and no soil. They made predictions about what might happen and carefully observed the changes in the plants over several weeks. We also enjoyed nature walks around the school environment, identifying different plants and discussing what we could see in the natural world around us.

In PE, the children have thoroughly enjoyed their sessions with Superball Paul, developing both their ball skills and teamwork. They have taken part in a variety of exciting games and activities, including guiding a ball carefully through the “carrot garden” while trying not to bump into an angry Mr McGregor! The children have been practising balancing, throwing, aiming and coordination skills while learning the importance of cooperation, listening and encouraging one another. Their confidence and participation in PE has been fantastic to see. It has been a fantastic half term full of curiosity, creativity and hands-on learning. The children have shown great enthusiasm in everything they have done, and we are incredibly proud of all their hard work, progress and achievements this half term. We hope everyone has a wonderful and restful break and we look forward to the final half term of the year!



CLASS NEWS

This half term in Chestnut class we have enjoyed getting out and about around school and exploring nature and watching things grow! Whilst on our nature walks, we have spotted some of the new Spring arrivals, lambs in the fields, and new flowers growing and we have even seen some tadpoles!

We have also been exploring technology whilst we have been enjoying the outside, and learning about images, what are drawings and what are photos. We had lots of fun using the iPad to take our own pictures of some of the beautiful things we have seen on our travels.

In Maths, English and PSHE the children have enjoyed exploring different fruits, cutting them into halves and tasting them to see which ones we like or don't like. We have continued exploring fruits during our role play and multi-sensory learning all about "The Hungry Caterpillar" which the children have loved.

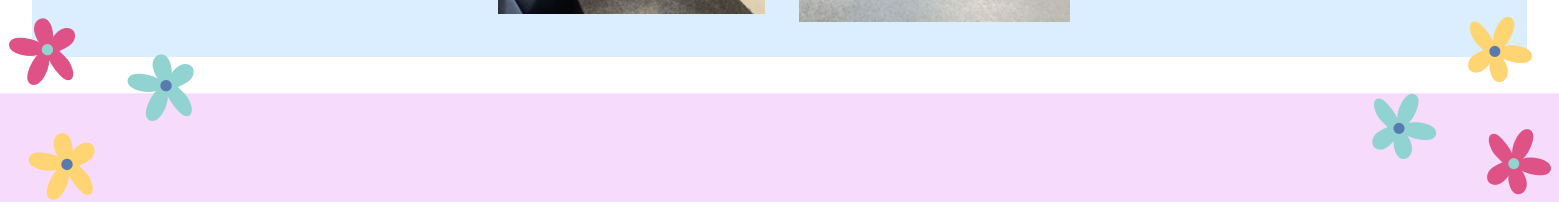
We have also been learning all about shapes both inside and outside of the classroom. We have explored different shapes using them as stepping stones, climb on or build fantastic towers with.

The children have all worked super hard this half term and grown in their communication and independence skills which has been amazing to see – we are so very proud of every one of them!

Next half term we have lots more fun activities planned based around colour – watch this space for some explosions of colour!

Wishing you all a lovely half term and we look forward to welcoming the children back for the final half term of this year.

Fiona and the Chestnut Class team

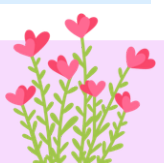


CLASS NEWS

A lovely start to the Summer term in Pine class! Our focus this half term has been Festivals around the World, pupils have enjoyed exploring festivals from different countries, making carnival masks and particularly playing a themed bingo from each different festival! As part of working towards their ASDAN Supporting Aspirations My Environment module, the pupils have been making the most of the schools outdoor areas, collecting sticks and twigs to build a hedge and also planting. Pupils have enjoyed sensory and practical learning over the last 6 weeks and staff have enjoyed seeing each individual make progress in their own way!

Have a lovely half term break!

Pine Class 😊



CLASS NEWS

Cedar class have loved visiting Space then also trampolining this half term for four weeks.

The children have developed their confidence over time.

In ASDAN we have done various activities including mosaics, weaving and painting.

In maths our focus has been money. We have been practising identifying coins and counting them.

In English our story has focused on celebrations around the world. The children have been engaging with the props, enjoyed tasting rice cakes and experiencing bubbles. They have done well matching pictures associated with the story, words or other pictures.

Our history focused on looking at photos of the children at celebrations when they were younger and more recently and identifying the features of celebrations.

Have a great half term!



CLASS NEWS



What a fantastic and busy term we have had in Bay Class! We have been super learners, explorers and adventurers every single week!

In Maths, we have been busy becoming measurement experts! We explored weight and measurement using lots of hands-on activities, comparing heavy and light objects and practising our measuring skills through fun challenges and games.

In English, we stepped into the world of Oliver Twist. We loved exploring the characters, acting out parts of the story and sharing our own brilliant ideas and thoughts. The children worked so hard with their reading, speaking and listening skills.

DT has been full of creativity! We used our amazing fine motor skills, “thinking brains” and teamwork to carefully plan and create our projects. We are becoming fantastic designers and problem-solvers!

One of our favourite parts of the week has been swimming! The children have shown so much bravery, confidence and determination in the pool, and we are so proud of everyone’s progress.

We have also enjoyed lots of outdoor adventures across the curriculum. Whether exploring nature, learning outside or working together in team activities, the children have loved being active and curious learners.

In Science, we became little planet protectors! We learned about caring for our world and discovering how plants grow and stay healthy. The children enjoyed exploring the natural world around them and thinking about ways we can help our environment.


This term we have also worked incredibly hard on our interaction, communication and regulation skills. The children have been practising sharing ideas, working together, expressing their feelings and using strategies to help them feel calm, happy and ready to learn. We are so proud of the kindness, resilience and progress shown by every single child.


Bay Class, you have all been shining stars this term - keep up the amazing work!





☀️ Cherry Class ☀️


What a busy, creative and brilliant half term we've had in Cherry Class! We're not quite sure where the weeks have gone (but we suspect they disappeared somewhere between paint splashes, keyring orders, and very energetic PE!).

 **Science - Habitat Hunters** - In Science, we've been exploring habitats, learning all about where animals live and why they choose those environments. We've had some fantastic discussions, some excellent descriptive writing on sea creatures, and a few opinions about which animals have the best homes.

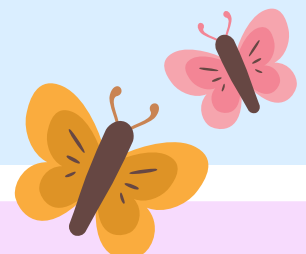
 **Art - Inspired by the Greats** - Our classroom has turned into a mini art gallery as we've taken inspiration from famous landscape artists like Van Gogh and Monet. The students have created some beautiful pieces, experimenting with colour, texture and techniques – we think Van Gogh would definitely approve (and Monet might have popped by for a quick look too!).

 **PE - Fun in the Fresh Air** - In PE, we've been making the most of the brighter weather by getting outside and playing lots of different games. There has been fantastic teamwork, brilliant listening, and some very enthusiastic running (sometimes in the right direction!). It's been lovely to see everyone enjoying being active together.

 **ASDAN - All About Transport** - Our ASDAN lessons have taken us on a journey through different types of transport. From cars and buses to trains and beyond, students have been learning how we get from A to B and sharing their own experiences. We've had some great conversations and lots of engagement with this topic.

 **RE - Learning About Christianity** - In RE, we've been learning about Christianity and churches, exploring what they are like and why they are important to people. The students have been thoughtful and respectful, asking some brilliant questions along the way.

 ★ **DT Enterprise Project - Our Star of the Term!** ★



CLASS NEWS

The highlight of our half term has definitely been our Mini Enterprise Project... and what a success it was!

The students:

- Carried out market research with staff
- Designed their own products
- Then created beautiful keyrings to sell
-

And wow... the response was incredible - we had over 80 orders from staff and families! We are so proud of the students for their creativity, teamwork and hard work throughout this project. It was such a joy to see their ideas come to life, and even better to see how proud they were of their finished products.

A huge THANK YOU to everyone who supported us by placing an order - it truly made our first Mini Enterprise such a success! ❤️

As always, we are incredibly proud of every single student. They have worked hard, supported each other, and filled our days with smiles, laughter and lots of memorable moments. We hope you all have a restful and well-deserved break, and we look forward to another fantastic half term ahead!

Warmest wishes,
Christy, Sean, Kaitlyn, Freya and Iqra



CLASS NEWS

Saplings have had a lovely half-term learning all about animals!

They began the term by looking at farm animals and learnt the song 'Old McDonald had a Farm'. The children loved exploring the different farm animals and the sounds that they make and were really good at matching the animals with the sound. After that, the children then moved onto our sensory story 'A Squash and a Squeeze'. It was lots of fun watching the animals trying to squeeze into the house. They completed lots of activities using the small world animals and even had a go at retelling the story using role play. To finish the term, the children have been looking at safari and zoo animals. This tied in nicely with Sir David Attenborough's 100th Birthday 🎂 where the children dressed up as a range of animals and one of the children even came as Sir David himself! It was lots of fun!

In Maths, the children have been looking at number, grouping and repeating patterns. They loved counting the animals, grouping them based on the animal and where they lived on the farm and were really good at this. The children then had a go at creating patterns by printing, repeating patterns on a range of animals including tigers, zebras and snakes. The children looked carefully at the different patterns and made sure to copy them exactly.

The children have also been lucky enough to work with Superball Paul this half-term and have been learning how to participate in a range of ball games. They have practised their catching and throwing skills and have learnt how to score goals in the football and basket ball nets. It's been great fun and we cannot wait to develop these skills again next term.



CLASS NEWS



Walnut class have had a busy half term. In Maths we have been learning about direction and in English we are continuing to learn about sentences and sentence writing. In RE we have been learning about places of worship and managed to visit a mosque and a church. We linked both of these visits to our learning about Islam and Christianity. We visited the library as part of our PSHE to include visiting places in the community. The pupils have been great at working towards developing physical development and fitness. The pupils walked to and from the library. We also had sessions with SuperBall Paul. We have also extended our learning to include employability looking at the jobs that are familiar to some of us. We managed to visit a few places including a chip shop, chicken shop and a pub. We have also welcomed two visitors into school to teach us skills and show us how to link these skills to employment. The pupils had the best time creating their own craft and learning how cook alongside a qualified chef.

It's clear to see how busy pupils and staff have been over this half term. There have been a number of community visits, adventurous activities and pupil projects around the school grounds and it is great to see pupils engaging and making progress.

Some of our secondary and college pupils have continued to work towards accreditation and qualifications this half term, including exams and we wish them all the best in their efforts.

I hope you all enjoy the half term week.

Paul Leaper - Headteacher

School will re-open on Monday 1st June



FUNDRAISING NEWS



Hillside PSFA

**STALL HOLDERS WANTED
£10 A STALL**

HILLSIDE SPECIALIST SCHOOL & COLLEGE

SUMMER FAIR

SATURDAY 27TH JUNE

12-3pm

- BOUNCY CASTLE • GAMES • MARKET STALLS •
- COCO'S WHIPPY ICE CREAM VAN • BUBBLE LADY •
- DONKEY RIDES • HOOK A DUCK • SUPERBALL PAUL •
- GO KARTS • GLITTER TATTOO'S • ENTERTAINMENT •
- CHAMPAGNE & SHENANIGHANS PIZZA • BAR •
- AND MORE •

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