



Autumn 1st Half-Term 2026

Bollington Cross C.E. Primary School Newsletter

Dear Families,

It has been a fantastic first half term, with pupils enjoying lots of opportunities to learn and experience new things.

A couple of the changes which were planned last year have kicked in and we are already seeing the benefits of these improvements.

Teachers taking charge of PE for their own classes has meant that PE lessons are more in tune with the children's needs and, as a result lessons, finish with children well-regulated and ready to turn their attention to their next lesson. Pupils are also able to see teachers in a different setting and as role models for keeping active. One of the best aspects of this change is for teachers to see pupils' abilities in the gross motor skills of PE and potentially, for some pupils, an area in which they feel most confident. We have also added fortnightly forest school sessions for every pupil. It is wonderful to see the insights on dojo into what our pupils are getting up to in the forest. Mrs Sutherland is ensuring that pupils get a mixture of cross-curricular sessions and pure forest school sessions, which the children were so keen to tell Ofsted that they enjoyed. Whilst I look back fondly on my own school days at Benchill Junior School, it certainly didn't have a forest or a fab forest school teacher! The children are very lucky.

Another important change, to support school improvements, was to ensure that all of our core subjects for pupils across the week – take place in the morning. This means that pupils learn Reading, Writing, Handwriting, Spelling, Grammar and Maths tasks in the morning predominantly (swimming on Fridays creating the only exception for some areas). This means that the children approach these subjects when they are at their best and freshest.

Whilst we are certainly seeing the benefits of these changes already – the more time passes the bigger the improvement we are seeing for our pupils, especially with this last point above in terms of children's foundational skills in handwriting and spelling, which we have had a real focus on.

Latterly, we have also looked at strengthening our offer in terms of homework expectations, as we identified that the type of homework set wasn't always showing the necessary improvements in children's foundational skills and fluency. What we hope to see now, in the areas of number bonds recall, times tables recall, spelling and grammar, in particular, is pupil knowledge improving to ensure that this knowledge, which provides the foundation for lots of other knowledge in Maths and Writing, is in place. With these priorities being on our School Development Plan, it was heartening to hear that Ofsted agreed on this focus.

Whilst on the topic of Ofsted, thank you all once again, especially with your feedback through parental and pupil surveys – which were overwhelmingly positive. We look forward to sharing their report with you as soon as we can.

Have a lovely half-term.

Yenson Donbavand



Celebrating the Harvest and being thankful for our environment at Bollington Cross



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Learning in Year 5

This half term, Year 5 have had a fantastic time exploring Earth and Space in Science. We investigated different models of the Solar System and worked collaboratively to create our own class model, helping us to understand the relationships between the planets and the Sun. We also studied our Moon in greater detail and carried out research into the moons orbiting other planets, discovering some fascinating facts about the many natural satellites that exist within our Solar System. In RE, we have been learning about Hinduism, exploring a range of important festivals and the symbols that hold special significance for Hindus. We have enjoyed thoughtful discussions about the similarities between Hinduism and Christianity, recognising the shared values that help guide people in their daily lives.

In History, we have immersed ourselves in the fascinating world of the Tudors. Using a range of historical sources, we explored the reign of Henry VIII, the unfortunate fates of his six wives, and the grand Royal Progresses undertaken by Tudor monarchs. We also investigated how villages prepared for royal visits and compared the lives of rich and poor people living during Tudor times. The children were especially excited to discover that one of our classmates is a descendant of the Tudor family, although we're pleased to report they haven't attempted to claim the throne of the classroom just yet! Alongside this, the children have excelled in Lacrosse during PE, developing their skills and taking part in matches during the final week of term. It has been wonderful to see the class working together in teams, discussing tactics, encouraging one another, and reflecting on what went well and how they could improve for their next match, truly embracing a reflective and enthusiastic approach to sport. In Design and Technology, they have been designing their own Wobble Bots and are eager to bring their creations to life, carefully considering the purpose and function of their designs before seeing just how well they wobble!

As this marks my first term at Bollington Cross, I would like to say what a pleasure it has been getting to know such a wonderful class. It has been an absolutely brilliant first term and I am incredibly proud of everything the children have achieved so far. I am already excited for next term and all the new learning, challenges and successes that lie ahead. Miss Payton



Learning in Year 6

The children had an absolutely fantastic time on our residential to PGL Boreatton Park. They built rafts, shot rifles, took on the trapeze, soared on the giant swing and raced down the zip wire. It was wonderful to see so many children stepping out of their comfort zones, encouraging one another and achieving things they never thought possible.

The staff at PGL were so impressed by the children's positive attitudes and exceptional behaviour throughout the visit, and we couldn't be prouder of them. They were a credit to the school. A huge thank you also goes to Mrs Potts and Mr Valentine for giving up their time to come along and support the trip.

Away from the excitement of PGL, we've still been busy with our learning! In science and Forest School, we've been learning how to classify living things. In art, we've been developing our photography and sketching skills, exploring macro photography and photorealism. In history, we've been fascinated by our study of World War II and the impact it had on the people of Britain. It's been a busy, exciting and memorable half term, and the children should be incredibly proud of all they've achieved. Well done, Year 6!



Worship: 'Thankfulness' has been the theme running through worship this half-term. From celebrating the wonders of the natural world at Harvest to considering the trials of Paul and Silas who were imprisoned for their faith, we have enjoyed reflecting on the people, places and experiences that we are thankful for. We even thought more deeply about how some of life's challenges might not feel like blessings at the time but by weathering the storm, we grow stronger which is something to be thankful for as we become better equipped to navigate life and support others going through challenging times.

Harvest: The theme of thankfulness ran deeply throughout our Harvest Festival this year as we spent the season developing our love for the natural world through learning in class, Forest School, and worship. The culminated in 3 incredible celebrations in church, bursting with joy, wonder, awe and appreciation for our amazing living planet. Thank you for joining us for the celebration and for your kind donations. Donations will go to the CORE Food Pantry in Macclesfield - a church-run food bank supporting our local community. Use the link to find out more: <https://www.thecorepantry.co.uk/>



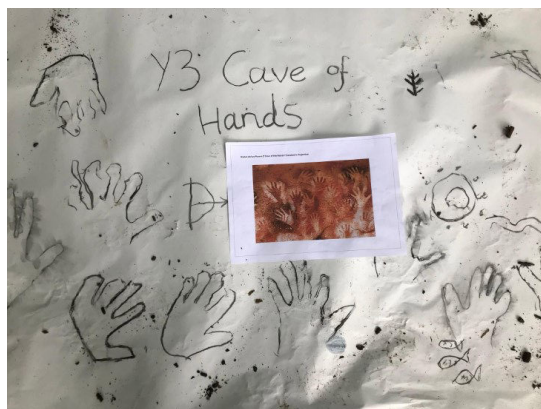
Learning in Year 3

Year 3 have truly impressed me with how wonderfully they have settled into their new routines: They have embraced our new language and vocabulary work so enthusiastically!

We have been busy exploring the Stone Age in History, discovering more about networks and looking at our school server in Computing, and tackling the challenge of creating moving hand models in Science.

Our Forest School sessions with Mrs Sutherland continue to be a real highlight as we explore seasonal forests. The children have also loved making and enjoying crumble using apples from our very own orchard, along with other delicious fruits.

We also enjoyed a lovely parent lunch, bringing us together as a school community. It has been a wonderful start to Year 3, and I am so proud of the children's enthusiasm, curiosity and eagerness to learn!



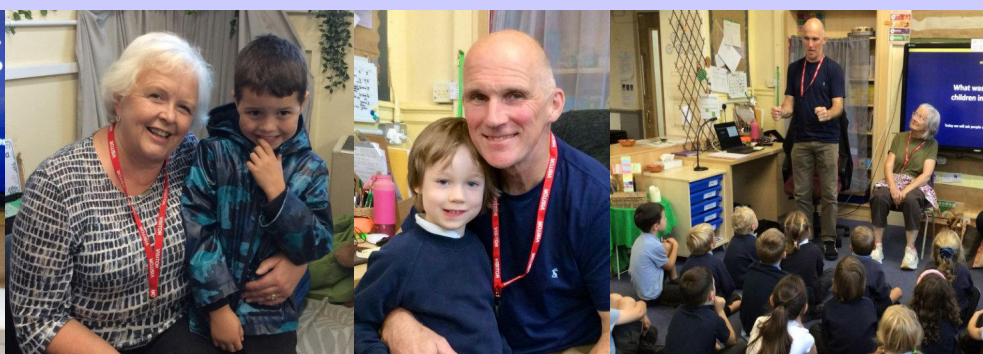
Learning in Year 1

What a super start Year 1 have had we are so proud of them. They have been so busy, turning up every day with a smile and loving their learning.

Some highlights have been in history, where we have been learning about living history and our past. We had some special mystery guests (Rafa, George and Kit's Grandparents), come to visit and interviewed them to find out what was the same and what was different about their childhoods. We found out that school dinners weren't as delicious as the ones we get now, and there was no choice! We also realised that some things, like celebrating birthdays with cakes and party games, were still the same.

We have been exploring the different seasons in science and taking our learning outside in Forest School, where we also made little mice for our harvest celebrations.

Our writing has come on so much, and we have had lots of fun exploring stories by Julia Donaldson. Retelling the stories and dressing up have been highlights too! In maths, we are growing in confidence with our number fluency and learning our number bonds.



A big thank you to our Year 1 visitors!



Learning in Year 4

It's been a wonderful start to the year in Year 4! The children have settled in really well and their zest for learning is simply incredible!

Science and Forest School have been a real highlight where children have enjoyed learning about how food is digested as well as how food chains work in the wild. We particularly enjoyed an investigation into how the firmness of a toothbrush affects how quickly we clean our teeth! In English, the children have enjoyed learning about verbs as well learning to retrieve information in order to support and argument. We particularly loved being a guest on BollyCross FM where we used what we had read to support our ideas.

Other areas of school life have also been a real joy such as P.E where we've been learning outdoor adventure skills and music where we enjoyed a series of drumming workshops. In geography, we have been exploring where our food comes, considering how trading fairly and food miles contribute towards sustainable food sourcing.

Art has been a real highlight as well. We upscaled our skills by learning to create texture and tone with different shading techniques as well as creating collages with contrast, balance and a focal point. We also used our skills to recreate our favourite harvest foods and forest canopies!

Next half-term we look forward to turning out attention to multiplication and division in maths as we move on from addition and subtraction. We're also excited for our trip to the Silk Museum as we explore life as a child in Victorian England!



Learning in Reception

Wow! What an amazing start to school life our Reception children have had!

We are so proud of how well they have settled in and how they are growing in confidence, making friends and becoming part of our wonderful school family. They have enjoyed performing at our Harvest Festival, having fun at the school disco, learning new dances and exploring the outdoors at Forest School.

Our learning journey is well underway, with the children taking their first exciting steps towards learning to read. We have also been thinking about the special people in our lives, celebrating how we are all unique and learning that being different is something to be proud of.

Through stories and discussions, we are discovering more about our feelings and developing strategies to help us manage tricky emotions. It has been wonderful to see the children learning, laughing, supporting one another and embracing every new experience. We are so proud of them all and look forward to many more exciting adventures together!



Learning in Year 2

In Class 2 this half term, we have enjoyed finding out about our wonderful world. In Science we have studied different habitats such as the rainforest and ocean and then focused on our own forest here at school. We have learned about the animals and birds that live there and enjoyed designing and making habitats for them as part of our Harvest celebrations. In Geography we have been studying the coldest and hottest places on earth, discovering what it is like to live near the North or South Pole and comparing the climate and landscape in Kenya to our homes in the UK. Once we had all of that new knowledge, we had to answer a very important question - Would you prefer to live in one of the coldest or the hottest places on Earth? We were fantastic at justifying our answers using the information that we had learned.

