St Helen's Church of England Primary School Newsletter

Term 1 October 2026

Thank you for such a wonderful first term back this academic year. It has certainly been full of fun, exciting and engaging learning for all our pupils.

🗓️ Important Dates

Monday 19th October – Friday 30th October	Half-Term Break
Monday 2nd November	Term 2 begins
Monday 9th November	School Photos
Tuesday 10th November	Parent-Teacher Meetings 3:30 – 5:00
Wednesday 11th November	Parent-Teacher Meetings 3:30 – 6:00
Tuesday 11th November	Year 6 Remembrance Service at church
Friday 13th November	Children in Need Day
Tuesday 17th November	Flu Vaccinations
Thursday 19th November	School Disco – 3:10 – 4pm KS1 4:30 – 6pm KS2
Wednesday 18th November	EYFS and Year 6 Height and Weight
Friday 20th November	Year 5 Astrodome visit in school
Tuesday 24th November	Year 1 Lion King dress up day
Wednesday 25th November	Year 2 Royal Engineers museum trip
Monday 30th November	Year 4 Anglo Saxon Workshop in school
Wednesday 2nd December	Year 5 Carol service Rochester Cathedral
Wednesday 2nd December	EYFS Nativity 2pm
Friday 4th December	School Christmas Fayre 2:45pm – 4pm
Tuesday 8th December	KS1 Nativity 2pm
Wednesday 9th December	School Christmas Dinner Day
Friday 11th December	KS2 Christmas Carols 2pm at the Church - TBC
Tuesday 15th December	Class Christmas Parties
Tuesday 15th December	Christingle Service at Church
Friday 18th December	Christmas Jumper Day and End of Term 2

Welcome to Year R!

We are absolutely delighted to welcome our new Year R children. It has been wonderful to see how quickly they have settled in — it truly feels as though they have always been part of our school family!

Their enthusiasm, curiosity, and smiles have already brought so much joy to our classrooms. We are incredibly proud of how confidently they are exploring their new environment and beginning their learning journey.

A heartfelt thank you to all our Year R parents and carers for your support during this important transition. Your encouragement and partnership make a real difference, and we look forward to working closely with you throughout the year and across the school.

🛠️ Reminders

- Please ensure all uniform items are labelled.
- PE kits should be in school all term.
- If your child is unwell, please notify us using studybugs or Arbor before 9am.

Forest School project

We are excited to share our new fundraising project to extend and enhance our forest school provision. We want to make the area more accessible and useful throughout the year. Thank you to all those parents who have kindly donated. We have so far raised £520.00. We have received some donations that have not cleared the bank so please ensure you are putting your bank details in your end.

Our Mission: To create an inclusive and welcoming woodland learning environment that supports learning, wellbeing and wildlife, while bringing our school and wider community together. It will give people of all ages and abilities the chance to learn, explore and enjoy nature.

POND: NOW



POND: OUR VISION



WOODLAND SHELTER: NOW



WOODLAND SHELTER: OUR VISION



Please help us create a space where children can learn, explore and thrive in nature.

The website also includes a community feedback section where adults can share what the project could mean to their family or local group.

https://sthelensfunding.org

**Shoe Box Appeal**

We are supporting the Shoe Box Appeal this year, to bring hope and smiles to families and children in need. There are two ways you can get involved:

Pack you own shoebox: Wrap and fill a standard shoebox at home following the campaign guidelines.

Donate individual items: Send in smaller items (small toys, school supplies or toiletries) to help us build shared class shoeboxes.

Please ensure that all boxes and individual donations are brought into school by Friday 6th November. A detailed letter has been emailed out.

**Water Bottle Reminder**

Please ensure your child brings a **clear sports capped water bottle filled with water only** to school each day. Water bottles will be accessible to children throughout the school day, although they may not always be kept on their desks.

To support focused learning, we kindly ask that children do not drink from their bottles during teacher input, so they can give their full attention to the learning.

Water bottles can be refilled as needed during the day.

**Car Park Reminder**

We are very fortunate to have access to the **Community Hall car park** before and after school. Please note the following important points:

- The gates will open at **approximately 8:30am** and close **promptly at 9:00am** each morning.
- As part of the agreement for using this space, **parking on grassy areas is strictly not permitted**.

We appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain this privilege and ensuring the safety and respect of shared community spaces.

There may be days that the car park is not opened due to staff shortages. If this is the case you will need to find alternative parking and we politely request that you **DO NOT** block the road or ring the school office.

**Breakfast Club and After School Club**

Breakfast Club is open every weekday during term time, excluding Staff Development Days, from 07:45 to 08:40. Your children can be dropped off at any time between these times and the Breakfast Club staff will then take them to their classroom at the end of the session.

7:45am - 8:40am - £2.75 per day, which includes a breakfast of cereals, fruit, and a variety of bread including crumpets, pancakes and brioche.

From 8:15am - free to all pupils.

After School Club runs every weekday during term time, excluding Staff Development Days, from 15:10 to 18:00. Children will be taken by staff from their classrooms to the Club at the end of the school day. Children can be collected from the After School Club at any time.

3:10pm - 4:15pm £4.50

3:10pm - 6pm £10.00 (this includes a hot snack)

If you have not notified us that you use a voucher scheme, Arbour will not let you book on without payment as we have to change your child's settings to authorise this. Sessions must be paid for at the time of booking or Childcare Vouchers/Tax-Free Childcare. If using CCV/Tax-Free Childcare, please email to notify us of your payment and which voucher provider you have used.

**Harvest Festival**

Thank you to our Year 3 pupils for leading such a wonderful Harvest Festival service. Their confidence, thoughtful reflections and enthusiasm helped make the occasion both meaningful and enjoyable for everyone who attended. We are also incredibly grateful for the generous donations of food received from our families. Your kindness and support will make a real difference to those in our local community, and we sincerely thank you for your generosity.



School Ambassadors and House Captains

At the start of the term many the Year 6 children were very brave and decided to challenge themselves and give a speech to the school in an assembly as to why they would like to be House Captains and School Ambassadors. Every child in the school voted for their leaders and we now have 5 House Captains and 16 School Ambassadors, who are settling into their roles and doing a great job. We were immensely proud of all those children that gave a speech.





What have we been up to this term…..

EYFS

Willow Class have had a fantastic and busy first term at school. We began the term by exploring our classroom environment, investigating all the exciting resources available, learning each other's names, and making lots of lovely new friendships. This term, we have been learning all about ourselves, including who is in our families and how every family is unique and special. We explored our body parts and created wonderful self-portraits. In Maths, we investigated repeating patterns and started learning about numbers to 3, developing our skills in subitising and recognising changes in amounts. In Phonics, we learnt our first set of sounds and have begun practising the important skills needed for reading. Most importantly, we have discovered just how much fun school can be and now fly through the door each day ready and excited to learn. We are incredibly proud of how well the children have settled into their first term at school and cannot wait to see what Term 2 brings, when we will be learning all about Celebrations!

YEAR 1

This term, Elm Class have been learning all about dinosaurs! In English, we have explored dinosaur stories, including *Tyrannosaurus Drip*, and learned about adjectives to describe dinosaurs using words such as powerful, strong and enormous. We have also learned about the fascinating discoveries of palaeontologist Mary Anning and how fossils help us understand the past. We enjoyed celebrating Dinosaur Day, where we made our own fossils using pasta and created volcanic eruptions using bicarbonate of soda and vinegar to explore what scientists think may have happened following the asteroid impact linked to the extinction of the dinosaurs. In maths, we have been focusing on addition, using ten frames and counters to help us solve calculations and write our own number sentences. In science, we have been exploring our five senses through exciting activities, including guessing animal sounds, identifying different smells and playing spot the difference. In art, we have been inspired by Samantha Stephenson's artwork and have created our own paper sculptures, exploring how to fold, bend and shape paper to make 3D creations. We have had a fantastic start to Year 1 and look forward to more exciting learning next term!

YEAR 2

This term, Ash Class have been learning about Polar Regions.
In Science, we have looked at different habitats and how animals adapt to their environment. We enjoyed a polar afternoon where we created pictures of polar animals, made puppets and looked at how blubber works. In Maths, we have been working on place value, number bonds and adding and subtracting. Our writing this term has included descriptive writing, features of an information text and adding suffixes. Ash Class have been looking at the Creation story in RE and discussed new beginnings and PSHE.



YEAR 3
This term, Maple Class have been learning about the Stone Age. The children are extremely excited about the visit from Ug the Stone Age man, and learning all about how he lived, what weapons he made, as well as experiencing cave art and using a bow and arrow. In English, we have been writing non-chronological reports about woolly mammoths and sabre-tooth tigers. They have also been writing a diary entry as if they had travelled back in time and visited a Stone Age family, making cross-curricular links to the life of these people. In Maths, the focus has been on place value, addition, and subtraction. In Science, Maple Class have been investigating rocks, learning about permeability and types of rocks. In RE, they have discussed how biblical ideas link promises made to Noah by God with promises made in church during a wedding ceremony. In Art, they have used the abstract artist Antoni Gaudí as a stimulus for drawing, mosaic, as well as sculpture.

YEAR 4
In year 4 this term we have really enjoyed exploring sound. We have engaged in investigations and creative activities, where we discovered how sound travels and what influences pitch and volume. We have also enjoyed researching a chosen mountain! We have created lovely double-page spreads, showcasing our newfound knowledge. In English, we have been developing our creative writing skills by using similes, metaphors and fronted adverbials into our work. Our maths knowledge has really improved, and we enjoy our daily times table challenge. Year 4 have worked really hard this term and should be proud of themselves!

YEAR 5
In Sycamore class, this term, our learning has centred around the Titanic, exploring what made this famous ship so special, theories about why she sank and why the loss of life was so great. We also discovered how the disaster led to changes in maritime law that continue to protect passengers today. We enjoyed a full-day drama workshop, immersing ourselves in life aboard the Titanic and the hours surrounding the disaster. Through acting out key moments, creating tableaus of the ship and imagining how television news might have reported the tragedy, we brought this important historical event to life. In English, inspired by our Titanic studies and The Titanic Detective Agency, we have written detailed descriptions, postcards, poems, newspaper reports and diary entries. These pieces helped us imagine life aboard the ship while developing our descriptive vocabulary and grammatical skills. We have focused on place value, addition and subtraction, in maths. Science has seen us investigate materials through experiments exploring thermal insulation, reversible and irreversible changes and material properties. In Art, we explored installation art, discovering how artists transform spaces and communicate messages, before creating our own thought-provoking pieces. We discussed how biblical ideas about love and forgiveness relate to world issues in RE, connecting Bible texts with Christian beliefs and actions. After half-term, we are looking forward to another exciting term as we blast off into our new topic - space!

YEAR 6
This has been a really busy first term for the new Year 6 children. We have been learning all about Shackleton's epic journey to Antarctica and written some lovely pieces of writing around this text. The children have done some fantastic artwork for this topic which they have all really enjoyed and also been extremely creative when presenting their topic work. In maths we have really just been recapping over the four operations, factors, multiples and then learning about prime, square and cubed numbers.

We had our exciting speeches from the children hoping to be House Captains and School Ambassadors and they were all praised for their bravery and excellent job standing in front of the whole school. Our winners have already been busy in their new roles, counting weekly house points, giving new prospective parent tours of the school and also helping out at the Macmillan Day coffee afternoon/cake sale.

All in all, we have had a really good start to Year 6 and the class now seem to be settling in to new routines and expectations and striving to be the best they can possibly be. We look forward to starting again after two weeks rest and hope they will enjoy the new topic of 'Time Travel'.