



DIARY DATES

January 2024

Wed 31st

Local walk - Voles

February 2024

Thurs 1st

08:30 - 08:50 Y1
Shared reading

Fri 2nd

NSPCC Number Day

*Premier Sports
Workshop*

Thurs 8th

Fundraising Concert -
Y2

Fri 9th

09:30 Open Morning
for Reception/Nursery
2024/25 Admissions

*Premier Sports
Workshop*

Tues 13th

iRock Parent Assembly
- by invitation only

Fri 16th

*Premier Sports
Workshop*

Mon 19th - Fri 23rd

Half term

Mon 26th

Nursery online
applications open

March 2024

Fri 1st

09:00 Parent Forum

*Premier Sports
Workshop*

Thurs 7th

World Book Day -
children to dress up as
a book character

The [school calendar on the website](#) has all of our important dates.

26th January 2024



And the end of January is nearly here! It's been a very busy few weeks and the children have shown great resilience and enthusiasm settling back into term despite the cold weather. Thank you to a parent in Foxes for sending us this beautiful picture of Swing Gate taken recently.

Open Mornings

We are proud to continue to be a 'Good' school following our Ofsted inspection in December 2022.

Our next Nursery Open Morning dates at 09:30 on:

- Friday 9th February.

These take place ahead of the online application system opening on Monday 26th February, you will find the link to make an application [here on our website](#). The deadline to apply is Thursday 28th March. To reserve a place, [contact the office](#).

NSPCC Number Day

Next Friday is
NSPCC

Number Day.
Children are

encouraged to wear their own clothing with shapes, numbers or repeating patterns on them. Please ensure all clothing is name



labelled and shoes are still appropriate for school and weather on the day.

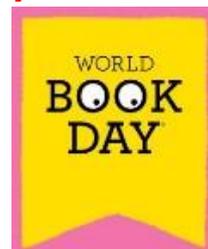
World Book Day

On Thursday 7th

March, we will
be taking part in
World Book Day.

Along with
Thomas Coram
and Victoria

School, we rotate on a three year cycle how we celebrate the day. This time we will be encouraging the children (and staff!) to dress as a favourite book character. Some simple, homemade and affordable ideas can be found [here](#).



Save the Date!

Save the date for our next Swing Gate School Litter Pick around the local area on Sunday 17th March at 14:00. Everyone is invited to join us, grab a litter picker and bin bag and help 'Keep Berko Clean'. We love giving back to our community and keeping our environment clean and safe. Let us know if you can join us by [emailing the office](#).

Shared Reading for YN-Y1

We are aware there was some confusion over the Year 1 shared reading dates. All dates for Nursery, Reception and Year 1 shared reading sessions are on the school calendar. The session takes place from 08:30-08:50 on each date. We have added an extra date for Year 1 next Thursday.



Pause for thought

*"Children are not a distraction
from more important work.*

They are the most important work.

CS Lewis, author

Feeling Good Week

The week commencing Monday 5th February is Feeling Good Week, an annual Hertfordshire event to promote children's emotional wellbeing by raising awareness of mental health, and showing where support can be accessed within the community. This year the theme is 'regrown' and we are planning to create a garden space in our school grounds to promote biodiversity. An email was sent today with further information.

FoSG are still collecting Woods Garden Centre receipts, please leave in the labelled jar outside the office. Once added up, for every £100 spent (within the last year) in store they will give the school a £25 voucher to spend. These vouchers will then be used to help buy resources for the garden project.

Donations

We would be grateful for donations of colouring books, paper, felt tip pens and pencils for use at break times. Please leave donations in the box by the office.

Polling Day

On Thursday 2nd May, our site will be a polling station in the Local Police Commissioner elections. We have made plans to allow all school to be open if it is just the Police Commissioner elections.

If a general election is announced, the whole school will be a designated polling station and will be closed to children. We will update families as soon as possible as we are informed.

Lost Property

Each class has their own lost property box that the children can check regularly. There is also a lost property cupboard by the school office

that is getting very full. Items include a toddler sized black boot, adult green leather gloves, many, many, many unnamed children's gloves and hats and a number of unnamed red Swing Gate branded cardigans and jumpers. Please feel free to come and take a look. At the end of this term, we will place unclaimed Swing Gate items in our preloved stores and recycle other items in our textile recycling bank.

School Learning

Voies have been busy this term with activities including making fake snow from household ingredients; creating asteroids from papier mache; a parent visit to talk about being a GP.



In Reception the children have immersed themselves into their focus text 'Stuck' by Oliver Jeffers. The children innovated the story and thought of their own ideas for things that could be stuck



in a tree. In Squirrels, the children came up with the idea of an axolotl being stuck. One literacy session they thought of different adjectives to describe an axolotl. Here are some of their amazing ideas, and the poor axolotl stuck!





Year 1, inspired by the artist Jasper Johns have been creating beautiful artwork. Here is Hedgehogs Class display. Jakey commented 'I think that is the best painting I have ever done.' We agree it's beautiful!



Year 2 spent an exciting time learning about Florence Nightingale. Her desire to become a nurse and passion to help others. How she brought about change for other women wanting to become a nurse. They enjoyed bandaging their peers and the adults! As well as making a lamp, for which she was famous. Children created artwork and diary entries to display in the hall.



Term dates

Our term dates for 2024/25 are now available on [our school website](#).

Guidance on measles outbreaks

Following the recent outbreaks of measles centred around the West Midlands, we have been asked to share further guidance. There is a risk of more outbreaks in other areas unless action is taken to increase Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) vaccination take up in

areas with low MMR vaccine rates. Measles spreads very easily among those who are unvaccinated, especially in nurseries and schools. The best protection against measles for children and adults is to get both doses of the MMR vaccine. It is never too late to have the vaccinations. Guidance and advice is available from [Measles - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#) and the DfE's [Education Hub blog](#).

Nippers & Netiquette

Online relationships

A fact that may surprise you is 26% of six-year olds use the web for social media. (Opinion Leader, 2016). Five to seven year olds online relationships are likely to be with people that the child knows in real life and will be managed by their parents or teachers. Model polite online behaviour and relate this to the way they behave when face-to-face with someone.

Ensure that children are clear about what to do if they are upset by something online, including someone trying to make them do something wrong. Reinforce that your child should never have feelings of guilt or embarrassment if they have come unstuck online. Speaking about mistakes or inappropriate interactions is essential.

RSPB Birdwatch

Following on from Mrs Hier's email, do you have a spare hour this Friday, Saturday or Sunday? Make that hour count by joining hundreds of thousands of people across the UK who'll be taking part in the RSPB's Big Garden Birdwatch. **Download your free guide today**, and you're good to go! Just remember to send your results to the [RSPB](#), as, whatever you see, whether it's one bird, 100 birds or even none at all, they want to know.





Wellbeing in Action

Healthy Eating

Peach and almond slices

Ingredients

- 375g pack puff pastry sheet
- 1 egg, beaten
- 175g marzipan, chopped
- 3 peaches, halved, stoned and thinly sliced
- 1 tbspr flaked almonds
- crème fraiche. to serve



Method

1. Heat oven to 220C/200C fan. Unroll the pastry on a lightly floured surface and cut in half horizontally. Slice each half into three.
2. Lay the pastry sheets on a baking sheet. Use a knife to mark a 1cm border, be careful not to go all the way through. Prick inside the border with a fork, then brush with beaten egg.
3. Bake for 10 mins until golden and slightly risen. Divide the marzipan equally between the pastry squares and fan out the peach slices on top, followed by a sprinkling of almonds.

Mindfulness

Mindful eating

Materials

- A blindfold. You can use a sleeping mask, scarf, bandana or any length of material
- Three types of fruit, like berries, grapes, melon or pineapple, cut up in to bite-sized pieces
- A separate dish for each fruit

How to do it:

- prepare the fruit and put into separate dishes

- blindfold your child
- place the dishes within reach then ask your child to pick up a piece of fruit from the first dish
- have them feel the fruit and describe its texture
- now, have them taste the fruit and describe the flavours while they eat (don't ask them to identify the fruit yet!)
- repeat with the other fruits
- once all three fruits have been tasted, ask your child to identify each fruit in order of tasting – this is a fun memory recall twist on the game!

Reflection - ask your child...

- What did you notice you did differently when you were blindfolded versus when you eat regularly with your eyes open?
- What sensations or tastes did you notice?
- Which fruit was your favourite to taste? Why?

And finally...

There was real excitement around the school as the children joined in mixed age groups in order to experience fun activities delivered by staff across the school as part of a history day.

Voles instead, got to learn about the first female doctor and also met a current doctor, one of our mummies.

This is what we mean by experiential learning!

Have a lovely weekend.

*Francesca Gallagher (Mrs)
Headteacher*