



## DIARY DATES

### January 2023

#### Thurs 26<sup>th</sup>

Archery Workshop – YR-Y2

#### Fri 27<sup>th</sup>, Mon 30<sup>th</sup> & Tues 31<sup>st</sup>

08:30-08:50 Shared reading – Voles

FoSG Warm Clothing Drive – drop off AM and sale PM

### February 2023

#### Thurs 2<sup>nd</sup>

09:30 Nursery Admission 2023/24  
Open Morning

Archery Workshop – YR-Y2

Ashlyns Learning Ambassadors in school (Year 2)

#### Fri 3<sup>rd</sup>

NSPCC Number Day – Enterprise Sale in classes after school

#### Mon 6<sup>th</sup> – Fri 10<sup>th</sup>

Feeling Good Week

Don Rae Dance Workshop – Chinese New Year Theme

#### Tues 7<sup>th</sup>

PM 'Connecting Generations' afternoon tea – grandparents invited to attend

#### Wed 8<sup>th</sup>

08:30-08:50 Shared reading – Voles

#### Thurs 9<sup>th</sup>

Archery Workshop – YR-Y2

Our [school calendar on the website](https://www.swinggate.herts.sch.uk) has all of the important dates.

## 20<sup>th</sup> January 2023

A belated Happy New Year to you all. It's been a great start to the new term and we are delighted to see attendance is back up to above the National Average following lots of cold, flu, chickenpox and other ailments at the end of 2022.

## Open Mornings

Our Nursery Admission Portal will open on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February for parents and carers to apply for Nursery places in September 2023. Our Open Mornings will be taking place on the following days at 09:30:

- Thursday 2nd February
- Wednesday 22nd February
- Monday 6th March
- Thursday 16th March.

If you, or someone you know, has a child due to start Nursery next September, [contact the office](#) to book a place. More information can be found on the [admissions pages](#) of our website.

## Attend and Achieve

The proud winners of the cup for autumn term 2 were **Foxes Class** with an attendance of **94.02%**. The other classes' attendance levels are:

- Badgers with 92.46%
- Rabbits with 91.02%
- Voles with 89.1%
- Owls with 87.79%
- Hedgehogs with 86.65%
- Squirrels with 85.9%.

The overall attendance for the whole school was 89.64% and the DfE target is over 95%. We are aware that all classes were hit

hard with illness last term. The school is still working tirelessly to bridge the gaps in the children's learning, especially as there has been major disruption to their education in the last few years due to Covid. Good attendance is key for us to be able to achieve this and we value your support.

## Welcome to the world to William!

We were thrilled to hear from Mrs Stone that her gorgeous baby boy, William, arrived



safe and well on Christmas Eve. Two weeks early, he clearly didn't want to miss the Christmas celebrations and what a wonderful early Christmas surprise present for Mr & Mrs Stone. We cannot wait to see them soon.

## Hall hire

Do you know that we hire out our school? If



you are looking for a venue for a children's party or are part of a group that need a place to meet, please get in touch with the [school office](#). Our rates are very competitive and you can hire outdoor areas, school hall and kitchen dependent on your requirements and budget.



## Pause for thought

*"Spring is the time of plans and projects."*

Leo Tolstoy, author

## Reminders

**Breakfast Club** – we have noticed an increase in children arriving at Breakfast Club without a booking. **You MUST ensure you have booked your child's place by 14:00 the day before the session** if you want your child to attend. This is so we can make sure we have the correct and safe staffing. Children not booked in may be refused entry if ratios are breached. If you are having difficulty with booking on Arbor, please speak to the school office.

**Warm clothing** - Now the weather is seasonably cold again, please make sure your child has **a name labelled** coat, hat, gloves and warm sensible shoes in school every day.

## Connecting Generations

**Feeling Good Week** is a Hertfordshire wide event that encourages schools and the wider community to promote children and young people's emotional wellbeing by raising awareness of mental health and this year's theme is 'Be Kind and Connect'.

As part of the theme, we want to promote interpersonal relationships and kindness and encourage the children to socialise with different generations within their community.

On Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February, the children will be put in small mixed groups from different classes and tasked to make an afternoon tea (high standards of hygiene will be adhered to!). Letters will be sent home so you can let us know who will be attending.

## Term dates for 2023-24

Our term dates for the next academic year 2023-24 have now been agreed with our sister schools; Victoria and Thomas Coram. You can view them on our [website](http://www.swinggate.herts.sch.uk).

## Classroom Appeal

One of our Voles parents has set up a [gofundme appeal](#) following the flood. Whilst insurance covered a large bulk of the repairs we have a deficit from items we needed to replace. We are supporting the appeal by asking our families to share the link with family and friends who may be able to contribute. You can find our appeal page [here](#).

## Inspiring others

Following our litter pick last term, we received praise and thanks from SEED (Supporting Environmental Education in Dacorum) who included us in their latest news commenting that we are an inspiration for other schools. Joanna Boyd, Environmental Awareness Officer for Dacorum Borough Council said 'We hope your school will help inspire others in the area to follow suit!'



Dates for our next litter pick will be announced soon.



## Litter Pick Loans

As we look ahead to the new year, we are beginning to think about the Great British Spring Clean coming up between March and April. We would love to see as many schools in Dacorum take part as possible. That said, we do have a limited number of litter picking sticks available to hire. As such, please get in touch with us promptly if you would like to borrow some of our litter picking sticks using the email address below.

Pictured above are pupils, teachers and Governors of Swing Gate School who collected an incredible 30 bags of litter during their litter pick on the streets around Berkhamsted back at the beginning of November.

## Donations

Nursery would be grateful for donations of good quality umbrella style child's play buggies, if you have one that is no longer played with. Please leave it at the school office.



## School Learning

In Voles the children have been subitising, recognising how many in a group of objects without counting. They have also been looking for



numbers inside numbers and finding different ways to record this. They have been creating patterns too. Some children have been

working on their drawing skills, this is Archer's fantastic crocodile!



natural materials. Then in art these were used to create a picture or pattern. They loved creating people, faces and monsters using the things they had gathered. They also really enjoyed looking at 'pebble people' pictures online and talked about what the pebbles represented.

In Year 1, Hedgehogs and Rabbits have been inspired to create their own art in the style of Jasper Johns, a well-known American abstract artist. They all enjoyed layering numbers on top of one another and then carefully filling in the white spaces with brightly coloured paint.

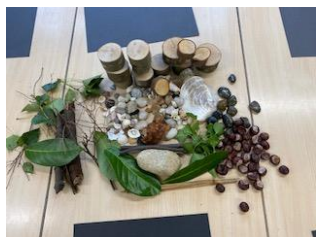


Mrs Hardwick was delighted to win this great construction resource at an Early Years Conference she attended last

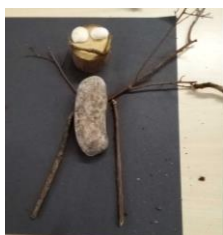


week in London. The children are really enjoying exploring it.

Squirrels Class began a new Literacy unit, based on the story 'A Little Stuck' by Oliver Jeffers. The character got his kite stuck in a tree and couldn't get it down. This prompted a discussion about

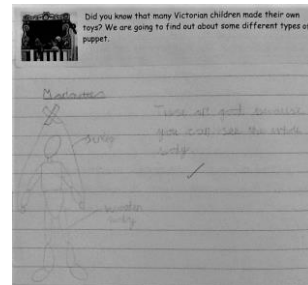


trees and natural materials. The children were interested in tree bark, sticks and stones.



Squirrels went on a walk around the school environment to collect

Year 2 have welcomed the children back after the Christmas break, where they have quickly settled back and are engaged in their learning. They



have been learning about what life was like for children living in Victorian times, comparing their lives with the lives of children today. The children have particularly enjoyed the opportunity to experience Victorian toys and other equipment used at that time. Badgers and Foxes have impressed us all with their fantastic sketches of puppets. They are looking forward to making their own puppets later in the half term.







## '50 things to do before you are five' app

We are keen to let you know about a free Hertfordshire App, '[50 Things To Do Before You're Five](#)', an exciting initiative that supports children's learning at home and in their early years setting.



The App has a menu of activities for families with young children, giving great suggestions for how to have fun and learn at the same time.

The "50 Things" App is free to download [here](#) or through the AppStore or GooglePlay store, and then select Hertfordshire from the list of regions/cities. Once downloaded, the App offers a list of 50 free or low-cost activities (under £20 for a family of four) that parents can experience with their child/children in or around Hertfordshire. This no-cost resource can be used to complement the EYFS curriculum and home learning.

We also have paper copies available in school on request.

## Book recommendation from Mrs Huke

'The Invisible String'

By Patrice Karst. This is a book about how we are all connected by an invisible string of love. It reminds us that love is continuous and even if a person or animal

is no longer around, that love for them will always be there. Mrs Huke loves this book and its message that no one is ever alone.

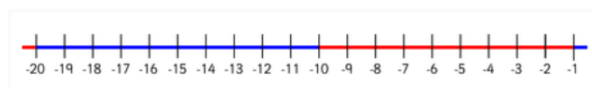
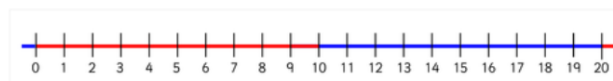


## Maths mastery for all!

When learning mathematics at Swing Gate School, the children develop a conceptual understanding through the Concrete, Pictorial and Abstract (CPA) approach where children

handle physical resources, use pictorial representations and record using traditional abstract numbers and symbols. To help you understand this approach, we will explore some of the key pieces of equipment and representations that we use at school. This week, we are looking at number lines.

### Number Lines



Number lines can be used from the Foundation Stage, where children learn to recognise and order numbers. They may be given a blank number line and asked to put numbers on it. In Key Stage One, number lines can be used to calculate. For example a child might be asked to solve  $7 + 2 = ?$ , where they would mark 7 on the number line and then count on two until they get to 9.

Number lines can also be used to solve multiplication and division questions by jumping along the number line in repeated steps. To solve  $5 \times 4 = ?$ , a child could jump along a number line in 4s five times until they reach the number 20.

At home, number lines can be drawn on the ground using chalk or on paper. You can also search for different types of number lines, for example when looking at house numbers or at the divisions on measuring tapes and weighing scales. Playing board games like snakes and ladders are also a good early introduction to the concept of moving forwards and backwards on a number line.

## Nippers and Netiquette

### Online relationships

A fact that may surprise you is 26% of 6-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.

## Friends of Swing Gate

FoSG are putting together a 'Swing Gate runners' team for the Berko run on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> March. Mrs Gallagher has already signed up and is appealing to all our school community to join with her and FoSG to join the team!

You can sign up [here](#) and when asked for the team name, please enter 'Swing Gate runners'. There is also a Justgiving page [here](#) for all fundraising efforts too.

## Berkhamsted Film Society

Did you know Berkhamsted has a Film Society? They screen about 17 films a season including English-language and foreign-language films from recent mainstream releases to art house films. They run at Berkhamsted Civic Centre on Mondays and Tuesdays from September to May. Open to members and non-members alike – this month membership has been reduced to £25 for this season, or you can pay £5 on the door if you prefer. Details of all the films can be found [here](#). If you would like any more information you can [email](#) them.

## Baby Fair Events

Hertfordshire Family Centre are excited to announce their New Baby Fairs are happening again this spring. These events will offer local families the opportunity to meet other parents,

enjoy free refreshments and fun activities to enjoy with their child. To find out more information please click [here](#).

## Make Your Home Safer this Year

More than three quarters of fire related deaths happen in the home. You can make sure that your home is safe by arranging a [Safe & Well](#) visit from the [Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service](#). Safe & Well visits are carried out by uniformed technicians free of charge. You will receive advice on making your home safe and on staying well. Fire and Rescue Service will fit smoke detectors where necessary and check your existing ones. With a working smoke alarm, you are four times more likely to survive. It won't cost you a penny, but it could save a life. To find out more visit [HFSC \(safelincs.co.uk\)](#) or call 0300 123 4046.

## Wellbeing in Action

### Healthy Eating

#### Sausage sandwich with pesto

##### Ingredients

- 2 herby Cumberland sausages, sliced in half lengthways
- 1 ciabatta roll, sliced in half
- 2 tbsp fresh pesto
- 1 roasted red pepper from a jar, sliced in half
- ½ x 125g ball mozzarella, sliced
- handful rocket.



##### Method

1. Heat grill to high. Put the sausages on a baking sheet, cut-side down, and grill for 5-6 mins or until cooked through, then set aside.
2. Lay the ciabatta roll halves, cut-side up, on a baking tray and spread each with pesto. Top each half with a pepper and mozzarella slice, then grill for 2 mins or until golden and bubbling.
3. Add the sausages and a handful of rocket, and put the roll back together, pressing down firmly to hold the fillings in place.



## Mindfulness

### Try the 'squish and relax' technique

Children have a natural tendency to tense up in a crisis. This exercise helps children to lower their stress levels and relax. Initially, give the child something that will actually 'squish' in their hands, such as play dough, a stress ball or a sponge. Later on, encourage them to use the exercise without these props.

How to squish and relax:

- Make sure your child is sitting comfortably with the squish object in one hand.
- Ask them to take several deep belly breaths.
- Tell them to squeeze the object tightly like they are trying to pick up a heavy weight. Have them hold this pose for a count of five, then relax.
- Repeat the cycle for a minute or two. Then allow your child to rest for two deep belly breaths.
- Repeat with the other hand.

Discuss with your child how their bodies felt during and after the activity. What did they notice? How could this help them when they are angry, upset or anxious?

## Social media

Swing Gate School is on Facebook and Twitter, if you have an account why not follow us to

keep up to date with our news. You can find us [on Facebook @swinggateschool](https://www.facebook.com/swinggateschool) and [@SwingGateSchool](https://twitter.com/SwingGateSchool)

## And finally...

Thank you for the many positive comments and feedback at Parent Forum last week.



It has been so lovely to see all the children back in school this term, rested and looking forward to the year ahead.

I hope that you all have a great weekend and see you next week!

*Francesca Gallagher (Mrs)*  
*Headteacher*