



HANNAH BALL ACADEMY NEWSLETTER



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<https://www.hannahball.bucks.sch.uk>

UPCOMING EVENTS

5th December

Hannah Ball Winter Bazaar

8th -12th December

Whole School Assessment Week

9th December

EYFS & KS1 Nativity Performance

11th December

Year 5 Trip to The Tower of London

12th December

EYFS & KS1 Nativity Performance

15th December

Year 2 Trip to Windsor Castle

17th December

Christmas Jumper Day

17th December

Christmas Lunch

18th December

End of Autumn Term
(Pupils need to be collected at 1:30pm)

2026

5th January 2026
Inset Day

6th January 2026

All pupils back to school



Message from the Principal - Mrs L Machingauta

"The real purpose of education is to prepare the orientation for future generations, who will progress to a new plane." Maria Montessori, 1948

At Hannah Ball Academy, November has truly been a hive of activity, reflecting our commitment to preparing our pupils for the future, as Maria Montessori so wisely highlighted. From Reception through to Year 6, our pupils have been working exceptionally hard, engaging deeply with a broad and balanced curriculum designed to build their confidence, skills, and ambition. Whether through hands-on learning experiences, developing key knowledge and skills, or exploring their creativity and resilience, every child is making significant progress. This busy and vibrant period is a testament to our shared vision of inspiring every learner to thrive and achieve their full potential, ready to embrace the challenges of tomorrow.

The Park Federation Spelling Bee Competition - Year 4

On 12th November, three of our Year 4 pupils, Mahamed, David, and Jayse competed against the top 27 spellers out of more than 700 Year 4 pupils across the Park Federation. The Spelling Bee Competition, organised by the Park Federation, involves a rigorous elimination process to identify the best spellers who then advance to the prestigious final. This year, the final was held at Godolphin Junior Academy in Slough. It was a proud moment for both parents and staff to witness our pupils excel in such a challenging contest. We extend a huge well done to Mahamed, David, and Jayse for their outstanding efforts and achievements!



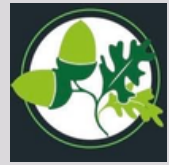
Autumn Break Reading Challenge



Thank you to all those that took part in our sponsored reading challenge over the Autumn break. We raised £86.05! Our new books should arrive shortly for our students to enjoy. A special mention to Olivia for avidly reading and raising a staggering £55! We are really proud.



Reception News



It is hard to believe November is already over! Our big question this half term is 'How do we celebrate and care for others?'. This has encompassed our friendships, talking about how each of us celebrate with our families as well as, looking at festivals within our November calendar.

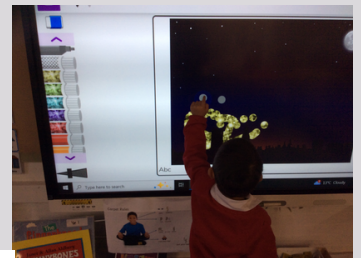
"Run, run, as fast as you can!" has been the catchphrase of the last few weeks! In Literacy, we have been reading 'The Gingerbread Man' and the children have loved using big voices and actions to retell the story.



In Maths, we have been introducing big concepts like 'subitising' (instantly recognising a number without counting, like spots on a dice) and 'cardinality' (knowing that the last number we say is the total amount). The children are showing fantastic understanding through outdoor maths games like hopscotch and bowling. We are beginning to recognise and write numerals to represent amounts.



The children enjoyed creating fireworks pictures for 'Bonfire Night' on the interactive whiteboard and with paint and glitter. We learnt about the historical links and why some many faiths and religions use fireworks to celebrate.



Be Bright, be Seen

For 'Be Bright, be seen' week, children have been learning about road safety. We have been talking about how we can dress appropriately to travel when it's dark or hard to see. We have also been talking about simple rules for staying safer when they are riding a bike or scooter.



Caring for others

In the classroom, we have been putting 'caring for others' into action by practicing turn-taking, sharing our resources, and helping our friends with their zips and coats. The children have shared wonderful ideas about what it means to be a good friend and how a simple smile can help care for someone who is feeling sad.





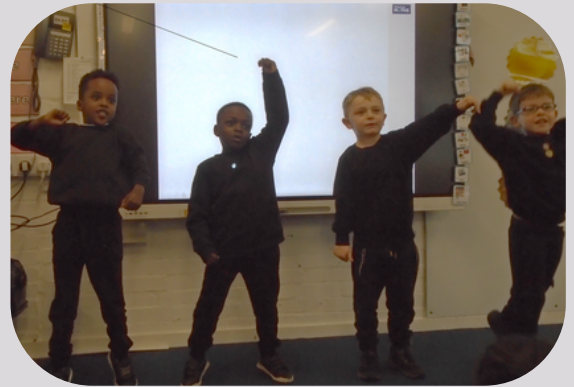
Year 1 News



This month in English the children have been reading Katie in London by James Mayhew. They have enjoyed retelling the story through drama and exploring how to describe a setting, using some of the exciting places that Katie visited in the story.

They soared into the sky!

In Maths, we have been exploring 'Shapes'. The children have been identifying different 2D and 3D shapes based on their properties. They have also investigated the shapes that can be found in their environment.



THE GREAT FIRE OF LONDON



In History the children have been learning about the Great fire of London. They have been looking at the evidence that shows what happened and how the fire spread. The children really enjoyed taking part in a workshop where they used drama to explore the events further.

In art the children have been using different media to create their art work. They have also been using different techniques such as printing and mixing colours. They are so excited about the final piece of art they will create for the display in the hall.





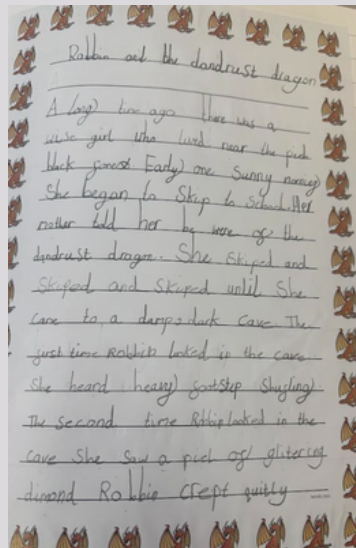
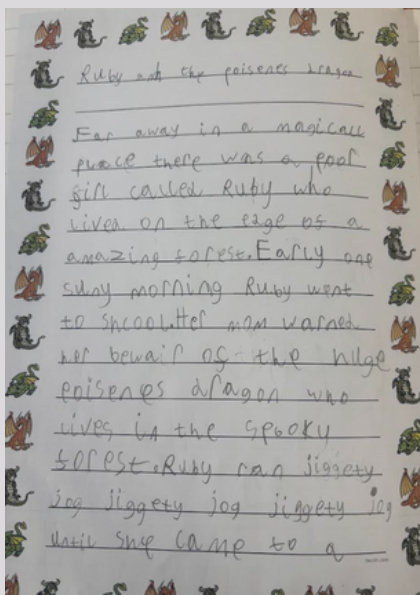
Year 2 News



Kassim and the greedy Dragon



In Year 2, pupils have been enthusiastically engaged in reading and writing warning stories inspired by the tale of Kassim and the Greedy Dragon. The children thoroughly enjoyed retelling the story using actions, which supported their oral composition skills—a crucial step before writing. They demonstrated growing confidence in using descriptive vocabulary to vividly portray dragons and other creatures, effectively warning the characters to stay away. This approach aligns with best practice by combining oral storytelling with explicit teaching of vocabulary and sentence construction, helping pupils to build a strong foundation in writing and communication.



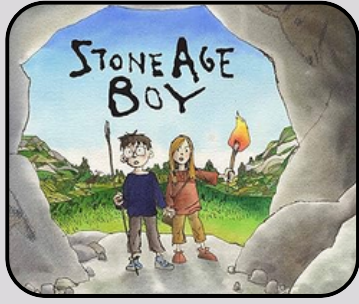
Year 2's reading rich environment

In our Year 2 classroom, we have carefully designed a vibrant and welcoming reading corner that invites curiosity and exploration. This space features a diverse collection of age-appropriate books, including fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and multicultural stories that reflect the rich cultural backgrounds of our pupils.

To make the area comfortable and engaging, we have included cosy seating options and visually appealing book displays that encourage independent reading and foster a sense of ownership over their reading choices. The environment is regularly refreshed with new titles to maintain pupils' interest and support their growing skills and confidence as readers.

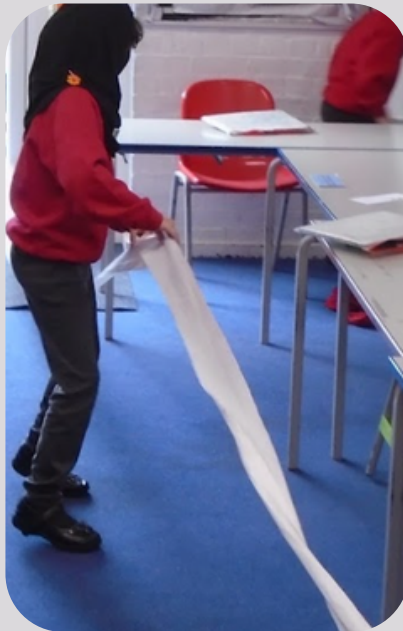
This reading corner is not only a space for enjoyment but also a resource that supports our commitment to developing resilience, curiosity, and respect through literature, helping pupils to connect with our core values while nurturing a lifelong love of reading.





Year 3 News

In Science this term, we have been looking at rocks, soils and fossils. The children have been looking at different rocks and discussing their appearance as well as doing different tests on them such as a vinegar test and a water test (to see if rocks are permeable or impermeable).



In History, we have started looking at timelines. The children used some tissue roll to create their own timelines. We placed different events that have happened on our timelines including events from prehistory.



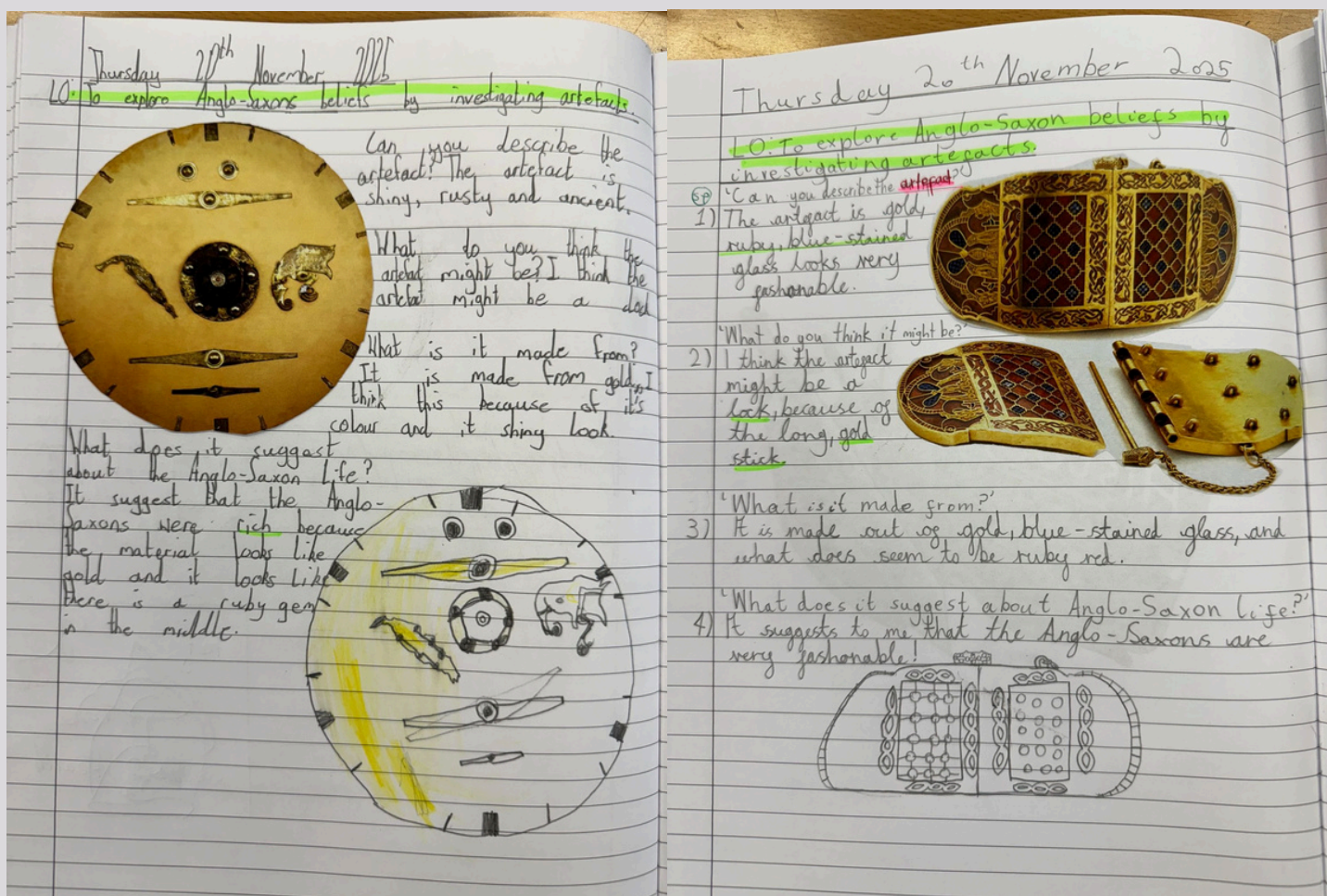
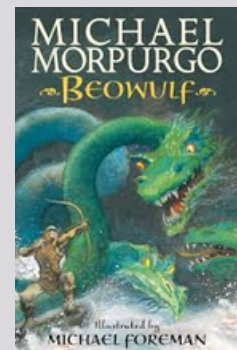
In PSHE we have been looking at celebrating differences. We know that we are not all the same and we realise there is nothing wrong with that. We each celebrate and admire our differences no matter what!



YEAR 4 NEWS

We are currently in the third week of Autumn 2, and Year 4 is demonstrating fantastic effort and focus as they deepen their understanding across all subjects.

In English, Year 4 have been busy rewriting the monster tale of Beowulf. The children focused on innovating the original narrative structure and literary devices, preparing them to create their very own monster tales next week. We are seeing some incredibly creative and gruesome ideas for new villains and heroes!



History: Anglo-Saxons

In History, we traveled back in time to examine the fascinating Sutton Hoo artifacts, giving us a hands-on look at Anglo-Saxon England and the incredible treasures discovered there.

Here are some examples of children's work.



We are seeing improvements in year 4 weekly MTC results - please keep this up! As well as TTRS, please encourage your children to use the following website for regular practice on their timetables:

MathsFrame

Timestables.co.uk

YEAR 5 NEWS



The Linking Network

Our Year Five children have a fantastic opportunity to take part in a Schools Linking programme this year. We have been linked with Monks Risborough CE Primary School and are starting to get to know them. They sent us some bunting to introduce themselves and we did the same. We are currently working on creating identity maps and are looking forward to sharing an online lesson in December.



Materials and Their Properties

In Science we have moved onto a very practical unit where we are investigating the properties of materials and their uses. We started by examining hardness of different objects, moved onto transparency and then looked at thermal conductivity (how easily materials allow heat to travel through them). This week, the students enjoyed creating mixtures and solutions and learning new vocabulary, such as solvents, dissolving and insoluble.





YEAR 6 NEWS

The highlight of the month was our incredible trip to the Chiltern Open Air Museum, where the children spent a whole day immersed in the life of a London Evacuee Child during World War II.

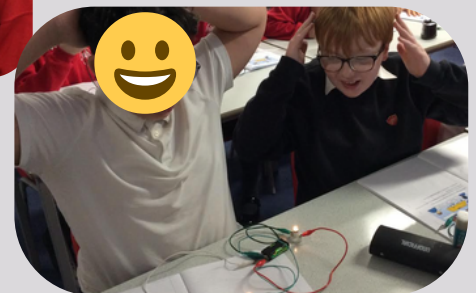
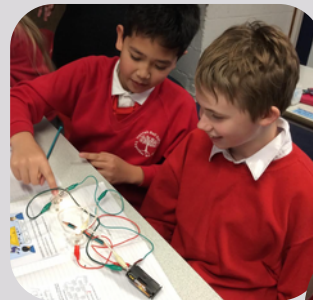
- They began their day in a remodelled air raid shelter, gaining a poignant understanding of life during the Blitz.
- In the 1940s schoolhouse, they learned to use quills and ink to write a letter home to their parents and tackled arithmetic using shillings and penny farthings.
- The children then rolled up their sleeves for 1940s household chores, mastering skills like polishing shoes and brass, and using a washing board and washing dolly to wash up cloths.



This hands-on experience brought so many day-to-day facts and experiences of an evacuee child to life. We also introduced the moving story of Good Night, Mr. Tom, and we hope this has inspired many children to read the powerful work of author Michelle Magorian over the break!



This week, we took a hands-on approach to electricity by working with electric circuits. We experimented by testing how bulb brightness changes according to the voltage supplied to the circuit. This helped us understand the relationship between voltage, current, and light output. Holiday Homework Challenge! I encourage all children to experiment further with a potato clock over the winter break. Please do send through any pictures of your successful (or unsuccessful!) attempts—it's a great way to continue exploring simple chemical reactions and circuits at home.



Teacher's Note: I would like to thank the parents for their support in ensuring children attend their booster lessons. Likewise, thank you to all parents who have been consistently helping with homework. We have seen a noticeable progress in the children's work across the board this month, and your support is making a real difference. Thank you!

SPOTLIGHT ON SAFEGUARDING

Why age ratings matter: helping children stay safe online and in game

As children grow, technology becomes a big part of their world - from sharing funny clips with friends to exploring creative online games. While these activities can be fun and sociable, it's important for parents to understand age ratings and why they exist.

Age ratings aren't just about violence or bad language - they're there to help you judge whether the content, interaction and features are suitable for your child's emotional and social stage.

What are age ratings?

Age ratings are like guidance labels that show whether a game or app is designed for your child's age group.

They take into account things such as: Language, violence or sexual content, In-app chat and messaging opportunities for strangers to contact children, pressure to buy add-ons or share personal details.

They're not a measure of skill or intelligence - they're about emotional readiness. A game might look cartoony or harmless, but it can still include themes or online interactions that aren't appropriate for younger children.



Common age ratings for popular apps and games

App/game	Official age rating	Why it's rated that way
WhatsApp	13+	Disappearing messages can expose children to adult content.
Snapchat	13+	Disappearing messages, location sharing and public stories.
Minecraft	7+	Online multiplayer can include unfiltered chat and content.
Fortnite	12+	Cartoon-style violence and in-game chat. Turn off or monitor voice chat for younger players.

The Wider Curriculum



Wow Travel to School Challenge

Buckinghamshire Council has taken the top spot in the Modeshift STARS leaderboard for large local authorities, recognising its outstanding work in promoting sustainable travel to school.

The council now ranks number one for the percentage of accredited schools in its category, with 31% of Buckinghamshire schools holding a recognised travel plan. This achievement highlights the county's commitment to encouraging active, safe and environmentally-friendly travel options for school journeys.

This November, we have had 88 Hannah Ball pupils achieved the next Wow Challenge badge. We are really proud of them all. Well done for walking, scooting or cycling to school in the colder winter months!



This month, we had a Kindness Workshop from the charity 52 Lives (www.52-lives.org) and their School of Kindness! We learned that kindness has three qualities – being friendly, generous and considerate. We learnt about the science of kindness and the positive impact it has on our physical and mental health. Next, we practiced empathy by watching videos of kindness in action and then said kind things to each other in the classroom. To put our kindness into action, we thought of someone we knew who could do with a little kindness. We then made them something in our classrooms and gave it to them that week. Finally, we looked at the quote 'be the change that you want to see in the world' and decided that we can help to create the kind of world we want to live in. The School of Kindness has a Kids' Club which is free to join where you will get a free newsletter with kind challenges, stories, activities, jokes, competitions and videos to watch. Just visit www.schoolofkindness.org/kids-club to sign up.

Hannah Ball-The Polling Station

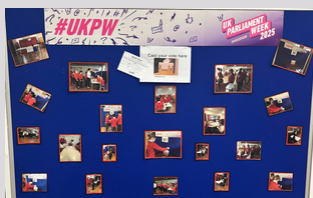


During the week of 24th to 30th November, our school council took the lead in organising activities for UK Parliament Week. This national event encourages all citizens to understand the important work of the UK Parliament. As part of our commitment to British values, particularly Democracy and Mutual Respect, our school actively engages pupils in learning about these principles.

Our school council organised a referendum on a topical issue: "Children should be 16 years old to access social media." They set up a polling station where all pupils from Years 2 to 6 had the opportunity to express their views by casting their votes in a secret ballot.

The week culminated in a special visit from Emma Reynolds, the Member of Parliament for Wycombe. She led an assembly and hosted a lively question-and-answer session, during which pupils asked insightful questions about issues affecting children in High Wycombe. Additionally, the school council presented the results of the referendum to the MP.

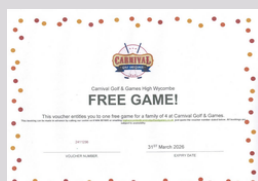
At Hannah Ball Academy, 61% of our pupils voted in favour of making it a legal requirement that children must be 16 years old before accessing social media.



★ December Attendance Incentive Programme

To positively reinforce the value of uninterrupted learning and 100% attendance, we are holding a special prize drawing.

Any student who maintains 100% attendance for every school day scheduled in December (ending Thursday, December 18th) will be entered for a chance to win.



Incentive Prize:

A Family Ticket (for 4 people) to Carnival Golf and Games in High Wycombe, offering a fun family outing during the upcoming school break.