



Hannah Ball Academy

January 2026 Newsletter

From the Principal's Desk

Celebrating Learning and Digital Progress

Since the start of this year, we have witnessed excellent learning, significant progress, and a strong celebration of our school values across all year groups. At Hannah Ball Academy, we are committed to providing a high-quality education that is relevant and fit for purpose in the 21st century.

I have been particularly impressed by how our Year 5 and Year 6 pupils are embracing technology in their lessons. As part of our Digital Strategy, every pupil in Years 4 to 6 has access to a Chromebook. Seeing them confidently use these devices across a variety of subjects to enhance their learning is reassuring. It reflects our dedication to preparing all pupils for their next steps in education and beyond. Together, we continue to inspire, aspire, and achieve.

A message from
Bridget Phillipson



Secretary of State for Education

Last week, Bridget Phillipson, the Secretary of State for Education, sent personal letters to principals and schools across the country in recognition of exceptional Year 6 results for disadvantaged pupils in the 2024–2025 academic year. We are delighted to share that Hannah Ball Academy is among the schools honoured with this recognition. A brief excerpt from the letter reads:

*“Dear Lorraine,
Congratulations to you and your team on the excellent outcomes achieved by the disadvantaged pupils at Hannah Ball Academy at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. Your school’s performance places it among the very best nationally, and this is a significant achievement.”*

We are incredibly proud of the dedication and hard work of our staff and pupils, and we are grateful that these efforts are being recognised at the highest levels. The letter will be shared on our school website.

Parent Survey

Thank you to all the parents who completed our Parent Survey in October. It is heartwarming to learn that 100% of respondents believe our curriculum is engaging and agree that their children are making progress. As always, we are committed to continually improving the experience for our pupils and their families, so we welcome suggestions at any time. The Leadership Team and Governors have carefully considered your feedback and have written responses to your suggestions. These will be sent to you shortly. Please take the time to read through our responses. If you would like to discuss any of these further, please feel free to get in touch with me. I would be more than happy to meet with you.

Mrs Machingauta, Principal

Dates for Your Diaries

Monday 1st February - Bikeability

Friday 6th February - Bikeability

Friday 6th February - Reception
Parents Reading Workshop

Tuesday 10th February - Safer Internet
Day

Wednesday 11th February - The Park
Federation Year 6 Maths Competition

Friday 13th February - Year 6 to The
History Museum

Friday 13th February 2026 - Last Day
of Spring 1 Term

Monday 16th February to Friday 20th
February -Half Term

Monday 23rd February - Spring 2 Term
Starts

Thursday 26th February - U11 Football
Team at Widmer End Community
School

Monday 2nd March - Reception Height
& Weight Checks by School Nursing
Team

Thursday 5th March - The Park
Federation Tag Rugby Competition at
Cranford Park Rugby Club

Wednesday 11th March - The Park
Federation Young Musicians Event at
Western House Academy

Spotlight on Apps

In this edition, we will explore apps and online spaces your children might come across and engage with. With so many options available, it's natural to wonder which apps are suitable for children and how to ensure they have positive experiences online. To help families navigate these decisions, here is a closer look at some of the most concerning apps and platforms.



Reddit

What is it?

Reddit is an extensive online discussion platform with 'Subreddits' on various topics.

What are the risks?

It features unmoderated or explicit content, including adult themes and misinformation. Users can privately chat with others through comments or direct messages.



Kik

What it is?

A messaging app that allows users to send texts, photos and videos without linking to a phone number - only a username is needed.

What are the risks?

Kik has minimal age verification and a reputation for anonymous interactions. Children can be contacted by strangers and messages can't easily be monitored.



Telegram

What it is?

A messaging service known for encrypted chats and large group channels, often used for community discussions or file sharing.

What are the risks?

Telegram's 'secret chats' and disappearing messages make it difficult for parents to supervise activity. Some public groups share mature or illegal content.



Vault apps

What they are?

Apps designed to hide photos, videos or other apps behind a disguised icon or password. Some look like calculators or utilities.

What are the risks?

Used to conceal messages or content. If you notice one installed, it's worth having an open conversation rather than assuming wrongdoing - curiosity often drives their use.

How to choose child friendly apps:



01 Explore together

Look at new apps with your child before downloading. Ask what they like and talk about what feels safe to use.



02 Check beyond the age rating

App store ratings aren't always enough - read reviews and see what kinds of chats, ads or purchases are involved.



03 Choose creative options

Favour apps that help children build, draw, learn or create rather than just scroll or chat.



04 Set up safety tools together

Turn on privacy settings, block in-app purchases and set screen time limits as a team.



05 Keep talking

Ask regularly what apps they're using and how they feel about them. Open chats build trust and awareness.

Hannah Ball Academy

Spring Clubs on Offer

	Club
Monday	Debating Club
Monday	Football (S1) Fed Comp Prep
Monday	Homework Club
Monday	Homework club
Tuesday	Art
Wednesday	Timestables
Wednesday	Tabletop Games
Wednesday	Football
Wednesday	Choir
Thursday	Football (S1) Fed Comp Prep
Thursday	Gardening Club
Thursday	Creative writing club
Friday	Cooking

Please call the office to book



Wow Design Badge

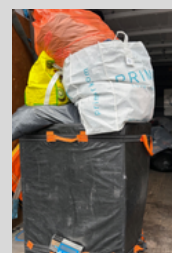
Join one of the UK's biggest design competition for children, for a chance to win FREE walk to school resources for an entire year!
<https://act.livingstreets.org.uk/s/8985157/wzSOxGnJO>



We have had 103 children achieve their wow badges today! Well done to those children, and families, walking, scooting or cycling to school! Keep it up for the coming months!



Thank you to everyone who got involved in bringing in clothes and soft items to raise money for our school. The collection came today (Friday 30th January) and they weighed the amount of items we had. We had 84kg which equals to £25.20. Thank you once again for supporting our school with sustainability and raising money for this cause.



Your Impact Thank you for completing Cut Your Carbon! Below, you can see the amazing carbon savings that you and your community have created through the campaign.

87 people made 3 journeys active across the month, resulting in carbon savings of up to: 133.1 kgCO₂e



59 people dropped the temperature to 30C for three washes across the month, resulting in carbon savings of up to: 49 kgCO₂e

63 people dropped their heating by one degree for a week, resulting in carbon savings of up to: 439.1 kgCO₂e



70 people dropped their heating by one degree for a week, resulting in carbon savings of up to: 439.1 kgCO₂e people made 3 evening meals plant based across the month, resulting in carbon savings of up to: 788.2 kgCO₂e



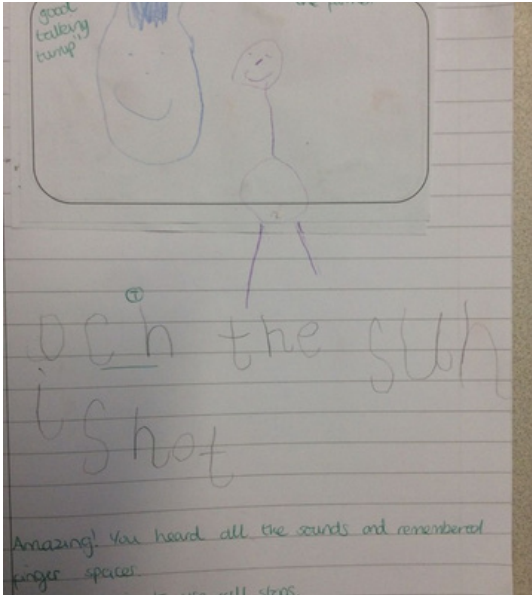
69 people meal planned to reduce food waste for one week, resulting in carbon savings of up to: 20 kgCO₂e

63 people had a device-free-day, resulting in carbon savings of up to: 12.6 kgCO₂e

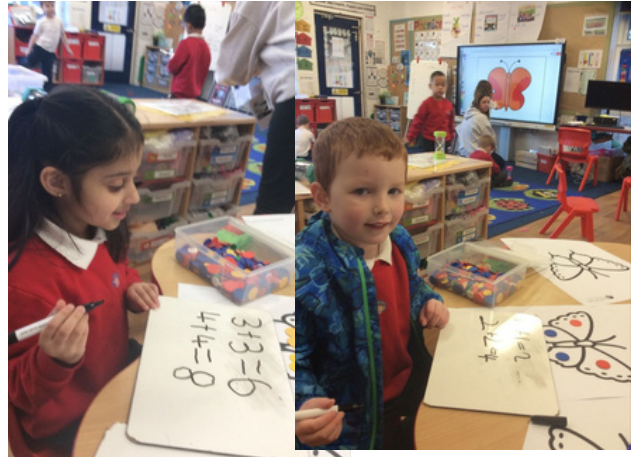


Reception Highlights

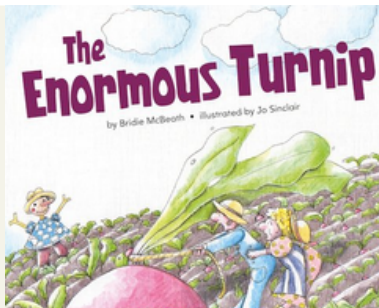
This half term our topic has been 'What makes a good story?'. The children have explored different fairy tales and had opportunities to create their own stories with puppets and props. We have been using our imagination and learning lots of new vocabulary along the way.



Well Done Eisa!

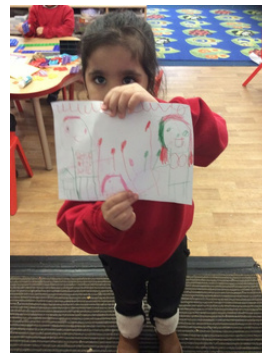


In Maths, we have been learning about the composition of numbers. By understanding how many numbers are hidden within a number, the children have begun exercising their reasoning and problem-solving skills. They have been trying to find the missing number. We have also been looking at doubles, which builds their mathematical fluency.



In Literacy, we have been reading 'The Enormous Turnip'. We have been focusing on how to verbally build sentences so we are ready to write.

We have had lots of fun using our imagination to change the ending to this familiar story.



As a part of our PSHE learning, we have been looking at our dreams and goals. We have been learning about the importance of persistence and resilience. We have challenged the children to keep going when they find something hard. The children have been showing us their persistence and resilience during continuous provision.

Please join us for our parent workshop on Friday 6th February at 3pm on 'How to support your child's reading at home'. The workshop aims to give you practical strategies and explain the resources we have available to you. We hope to see you all there!



Year 1 Highlights

What a fantastic start we have made to the new term. The children have been engaged across the curriculum, and have showed great focus and attitude to their learning. Thank you for your support with your child's learning and routines.



Goldilocks went into the cottage.



The children have thoroughly enjoyed learning about Goldilocks and the three bears. They have carried out drama, retelling of the story and were very surprised to find the cottage scene in the classroom!



The children have enjoyed designing badges for the WOW - walk to school - Challenge competition. They look amazing. We hope they make the shortlist!



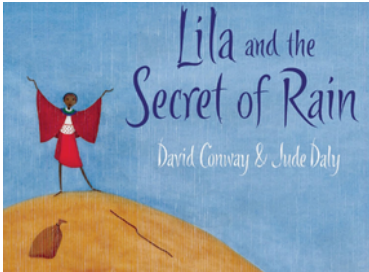
The children have also enjoyed taking part in science and topic where we have been learning about the countries that make up the UK, and the different types of weather that we find throughout the seasons.

Thank you for supporting your children to do their homework and spellings. It makes a real difference!

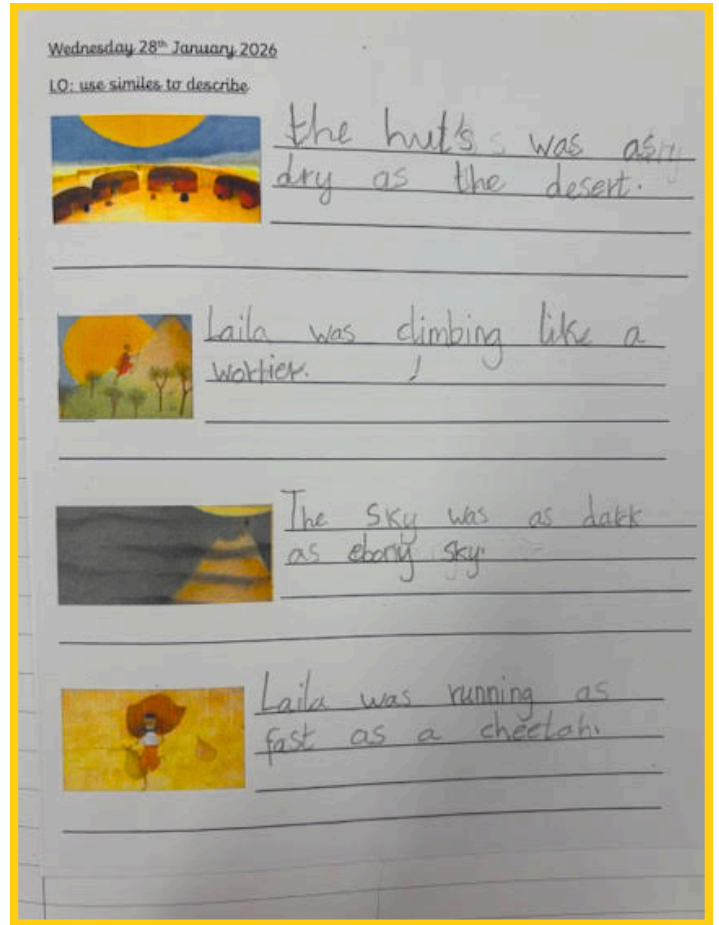




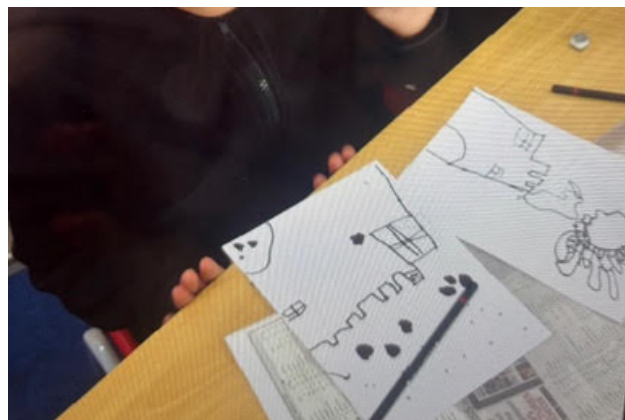
Year 2 Highlights



We have been exploring our story 'Lila and the Secret of Rain' in English which the children have really been enjoying! We are all able to retell the story, use adjectives to describe the character and setting, and begin to use similes in our writing! The children have shown great engagement with this story!

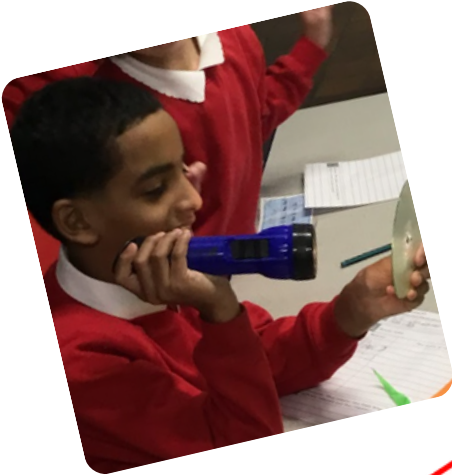


We have been experimenting with shading in art to create magnificent dragons! The children were really creative with their designs and showed how they can use different mediums to create lines and shapes.



Year 3 Highlights

Science: Light & Shadows

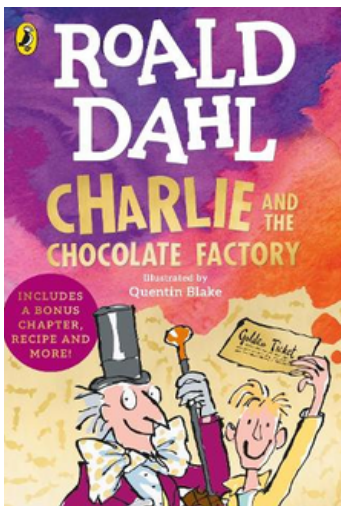


At midday when the sun is high above us, our shadows become short and stubby

In the morning or evening when the sun is low in the sky, our shadows are long and stretched out.



Our classroom has been buzzing with excitement as the children turned into Light Detectors and Shadow Scientists. We have been exploring the invisible power of light and how it shapes the world around us. We kicked off our journey by identifying different light sources. We had great fun spotting "imposter" light sources (like mirrors and the moon) that don't actually glow on their own! Next, we went on a "shadow hunt" to understand how these dark shapes are born. The children discovered that a shadow is actually a lack of light. When an object gets in the way and blocks light from a source, it creates a silhouette. We observed how the Sun appears at different points throughout the day, from rising in the morning to setting in the evening.



Our class text this half term is Charlie and the Chocolate Factory by Roald Dahl. Willy Wonka is the most extraordinary chocolate maker in the world and he's given five children golden tickets to visit his famous chocolate factory. Charlie is the most deserving winner of the five and the adventures begin as soon as the factory gates open! In English, we have been using our class text to write character descriptions based on the wonderful world of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory. We will also be creating an Explanation Text on 'The Journey of Chocolate'.

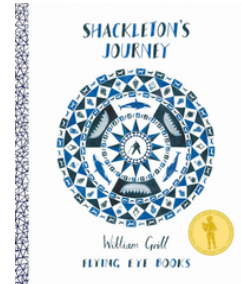




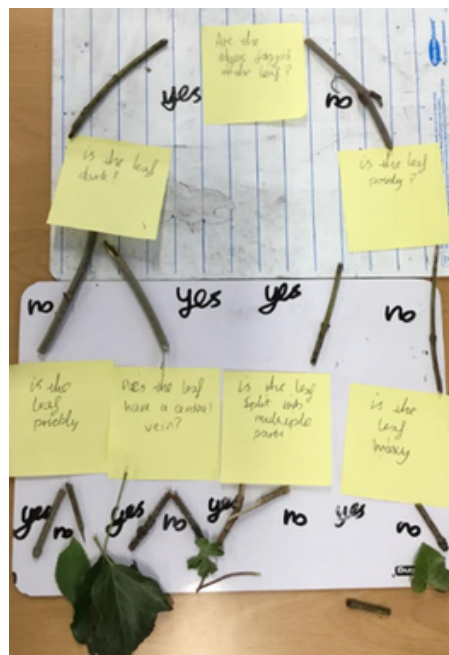
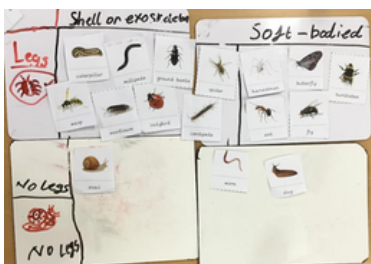
Year 4 Highlights

We have had a great start to the new year. Despite a few challenges at the start of the term, the class have shown real resilience demonstrating a core value of Hannah Ball.

In English, we have started our new text 'Shackleton's Journey'. The children have been learning all about Sir Ernest Shackleton's epic journey across the Atlantic with his crew and surviving despite facing horrific conditions. The children will be innovating their own journey tale focusing on character description in the coming weeks. We look forward to reading these.



In Science, Year 4 have started their new topic 'Living things' and their habitats. The children have learnt what a 'Taxonomist' is and have become one themselves. They have been exploring the grounds of Hannah Ball looking for different types of leaves and then classifying them. We have also looked at different ways to record data when grouping animals using Carroll and Venn diagrams.



Who lives in Antarctica? In Geography, Year 4 have started a new topic with cross-curricular links to English. The children have located Antarctica on a map and learnt about lines of latitude and longitude. The most important line of latitude being the equator. They have discovered the human and physical features of Antarctica as well as the climate and landscape. They created a postcard in the view of a scientist working in Antarctica and explained what the conditions were like living there.

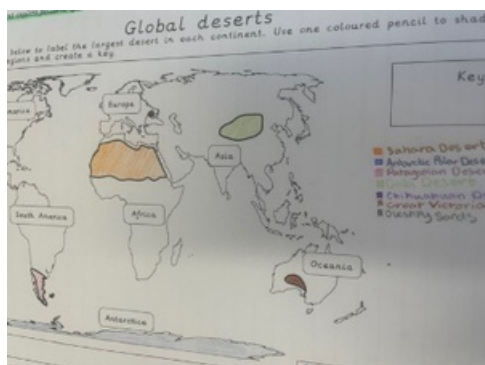
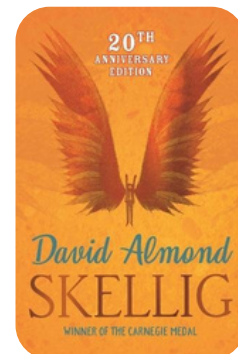


We would like to say well done to all those who have been practicing their timetables and attending the weekly Timestables club. We are seeing improvements in the weekly MTC results with more students scoring 25/25. Thank you and please keep this up! Continue to practice on: Maths frame TTRS Timestables.co.uk

Year 5 News

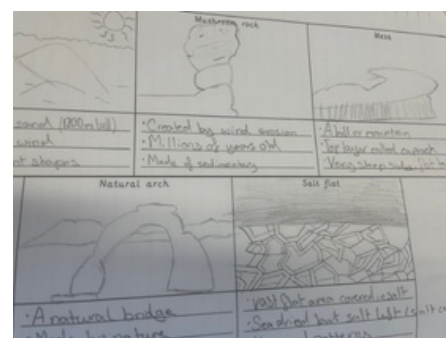
Suspenseful Stories

January has been an exciting month as we have been writing Tales of Fear based around the book Skellig by David Almond. The children have learnt how to excite the reader by using short sentences, hiding the threat and showing how scared their characters are. We've applied our learning in Geography by writing a story about a character alone in a desert.



Deserts

In Geography, we have been studying deserts, particularly focused on The Mojave Desert in the USA.



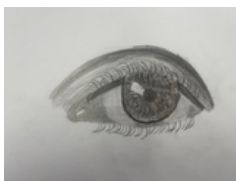
Living Things and their Habitats

In Science, we have been exploring the life cycle of plants and animals, starting with a dissection of a plant to find the parts needed for reproduction.



Art

The children have been learning how to draw portraits, paying particular attention to how to create an accurate drawing of an eye.



Year 6 News

Welcome back! Year 6 has hit the ground running with a blend of several subjects featuring this month. To kick start Science this term, we've jumped into how living things change over time. Through hands-on activities, the children investigated inheritance, evolution and how animals adapt to survive in their unique environments.



In Geography, we've been mastering OS maps to identify and locate the various energy sources used across the UK, from wind farms to power stations. The children have shown great determination in grasping the challenge of reading and creating their own 6-figure grid references.

Linking with our reading of the book Darwin's Dragons, we've entered the world of mythical biology! In Art, we've begun sketching and shading dragon eyes, focusing on creating realistic textures and depth. The results are looking appropriately fierce!



Our successes! 🏆

A massive well-done to the whole class! Year 6 has won the attendance award for three weeks in a row this term. This "hat-trick" is a testament to our incredible teamwork and the children's commitment to their learning. Let's keep that streak alive!

Lastly, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all parents for your continued support. Attendance at our booster sessions has been fantastic, and I am already seeing the positive impact of this extra focus on the children's confidence and performance in class. Your commitment is truly making a difference.

