



**The Hermitage School
and
The Oaktree School**



Dear Parents and Guardians,

December at both The Oaktree and The Hermitage Schools is a time of reflection, celebration, and preparation for the festive season.

We are immensely proud of our children for their hard work and dedication throughout the year and this past term in particular. Our recent assessments have showcased the exceptional talent and commitment of our learners, many who have started their new classes and year groups with a great attitude to learning and behaviours conducive to helping them excel. Congratulations to all those who have made progress, and a special mention to the teachers and support staff for their unwavering support this term.

December has been packed with events that signify both the academic and festive spirit. From our annual season events to various classroom-based activities, the children have enjoyed numerous opportunities to showcase their skills and creativity, including our recent Woking Schools Brush Party, two Carol Concerts at St. John's Church and numerous Christmas performances. It was wonderful to see so many parents and guardians join us in celebrating these activities during this joyous season, in addition to the families who arrived in their droves to this year's HOPA Christmas Fair. Thank you for your continued support of the schools.

As part of our commitment to giving back, our schools also organised a successful charity initiative this month. The children all took part in Walking for the Wounded and, so far as a community, we have raised a staggering sum of money to support those injured during conflict. This, following Remembrance Day in November and Harvest in October, supports our aim to instil the values of respect, empathy and compassion in our children by actively engaging in activities that support those in need. Thank you all for your generosity this term.

Although we bid a fond farewell to a few members of staff this term and wish Oli Chadwick, Mrs Preece, Mrs Altana and Mrs Flintham the very best of luck in their futures, we know it is not a firm goodbye, as many will stay in touch, visiting us in the new year. The New Year brings us new members of staff who we look forward to inducting during our INSET day on Tuesday, 2nd January. Please note term starts back for all children on Wednesday, 3rd January 2024.

As always, I am immensely proud of the accomplishments of our children and the dedication of our staff. Thank you also to you all for your continued support and involvement in our school community.

Wishing you all a peaceful holiday season and a prosperous New Year!

Kind regards,

Clare Spires

Executive Headteacher

Nursery

The Nursery children have had a fantastic first half term, settling in well to their new environment, with a keen interest to explore all learning opportunities available to them.

Our topic this term has been “Me and My Community,” where we have drawn pictures of ourselves, using the mirrors and shared who lives in their home.

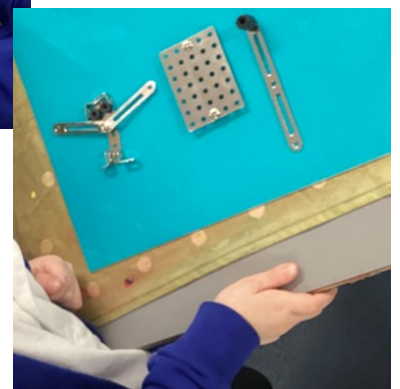
One of our main focuses has been supporting the children with recognising their own feelings and emotions. We’ve used the “Colour Monster” story to support the children with this. The teachers have very much enjoyed seeing the children’s faces for each emotion.

We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and look forward to seeing you in January for another exciting term



Reception

The children have completed their Marvellous Machines topic. Most of the year group have learned all of their single letter sounds and some children have begun learning digraphs. They are now applying this knowledge to decode simple words. In Maths, the children have been mastering numbers to 5. They have been identifying different numbers that make up the numbers to 5 and are able to subitise these amounts. The children have enjoyed learning about different celebrations. They began by learning about times that we celebrate (e.g. birthdays and weddings) before exploring Diwali and Christmas. After the Christmas holidays we will begin our new topic, ‘Long Ago’.



Year 1

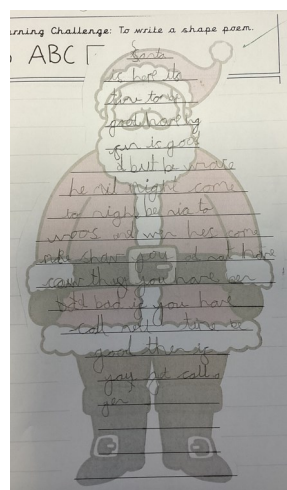
In DT, children have designed, made and evaluated their own puppets. They have shown a keen eye for detail and have worked incredibly hard to develop their stitching skills along the way.



In RE we have been learning all about the first Christmas. The children have been finding out who was there for the Nativity and considering what would have happened if someone or something hadn't been! They also got to put this all into practice with their amazing Nativity, which left all of us teachers feeling incredibly proud!



In our last few weeks we have been developing our poetry skills, particularly looking into rhyming couplets in shape and acrostic poems to get us into the Christmas spirit. The children did an amazing job and wrote some wonderful poems.



From all of us in the Year 1 team—we wish you a merry Christmas and look forward to welcoming the children back in the new year.



Year 2

We are so proud of all the children for how hard they have worked throughout the weeks leading up to the KS1 performances and we hope you loved it as much as we did!

In Science the children have been learning about different habitats and food chains. They have begun to make their own food chains and understand keywords 'producers' and 'consumers'. In English the children have explored the story of 'The Jolly Postman and other people's letters' and written for a variety of different purposes such as letters, diaries, adverts and recounts. They have been developing their vocabulary and using interesting words within their writing. In Maths the children have been adding and subtracting two-digit numbers as well as learning the difficult concept of exchanging! We hope you all enjoy a well-earned break.

The Year 2 Team



Year 3

Year 3 finished off their exciting Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age topic by visiting the amazing Butser Farm. On the trip, the children got to go in houses built in the way that prehistoric people would have built – they particularly enjoyed eating their packed lunch in a round house around the lovely, warm fire! As well as this, the children explored chalk carving and copper jewellery and how to keep warm in prehistoric times. The Year 3 staff were very proud of the children's behaviour on the trip and their engagement with the learning.



Year 4

Mexicolore Workshop

On Wednesday 1st November, Year 4 participated in an excellent workshop run by Mexicolore! The children enjoyed learning about the weapons the Maya and Aztec people used, why they sacrificed people, the importance of cocoa in everyday life and how this was used as the currency to buy goods and food. They also learnt how to chant from one to four in Mayan and even had a chance to play the different musical instruments and wear Mayan and Aztec clothing!



Year 5

During this term, our topic has been all about World War 1. We visited the Brookwood War Memorial Cemetery, where we learnt so much more about the soldiers that fought for us all. We thoroughly enjoyed our outdoor learning morning at the St John's Lye, imagining we were soldiers in the trenches. In Art, we used blending and cutting skills to create a scene of a poppy field remembering the fallen soldiers.



Year 6

Year 6 have been studying electricity in their Science lessons. They investigated how changing different components altered the brightness of a bulb. They are now making racing buggies which they hope will win a race across the hall against their peers. They are having to employ all their problem solving skills and what they have learnt in their Science lessons to get their buggies moving via an electrical circuit.

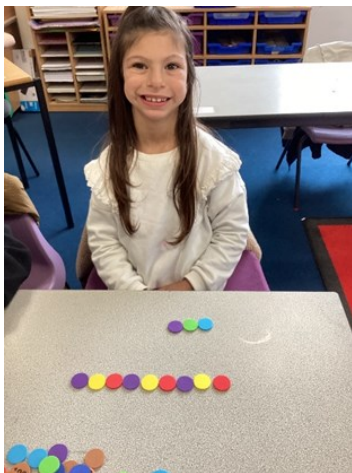


Orchard

We had a festive time taking part in the Walking with the Wounded School Council event. The children enjoyed their refreshing walk and we discussed the importance of the charity!



This half term, in Maths, some of the children have been working on their repeating pattern



We have also enjoyed our half-termly visits from Dory the therapy dog. The children have grown in confidence when she comes to visit.



Sport



In October half term, some children from the school swimming team and a few staff members took part in the Woking Rotary Swimathon to help support raising money for local charities. We had an hour to swim as many lengths as possible in teams.

Overall, we completed over 300 lengths. Thank you to all involved and the encouragement from friends and families in the stand.

Dodgeball

A group of some Year 5 and 6 children recently took part in a dodgeball festival at Woking Leisure Centre.

"It was an amazing experience. It was very fun playing dodgeball. We went because it gives everyone a chance to play for the school. We all had an amazing time."

Grace, Cherry class



Netball

There have been a few Netball events in the last few weeks! Firstly, some of the Year 6 Netball team took part in a tournament at Greenfield School. They played a series of matches against other schools. The girls won 2 of their matches and lost 2 of their matches. It was a great afternoon of Netball that warmed the girls up for more events to come this academic year!

We then hosted some home matches against St John's School, where we had two Year 6 teams participating. It was a race against the light to get both matches played but both teams played brilliantly and managed to win both games! Thank you to all the families that supported on the side-line.



School Council

The Hermitage and Oaktree School Council members organised our event to raise money for Walking with the Wounded. On Friday the 1st December all of the children in both schools took part in a sponsored walk on the school field. We want to say a big thank you to everyone who has donated to the cause!



I think the walk was a great addition for the school as it helped us focus on what is happening out there in the wars and that wounded people still need help. It was also nice to relax as we walked in the cold morning, let alone chat with our friends as we got our steps in!

– Lucy, Cherry Class

So far we have managed to raise a fantastic £310.90 but it is not too late to still donate to the cause:

[https://
www.walkinghomeforchristmas.com/
users/bethany-foster](https://www.walkinghomeforchristmas.com/users/bethany-foster)

Thank you for all the donations we have already received!



Reading



Thank you to everyone who donated books for the Hospice Christmas advent book appeal. Kerry Gibb, (a local author) who is a representative from the hospice, was delighted when she came into school to collect all the books that had been donated.

Friday lunch time reading club

A group of Year 6 children and Mrs Kimani (Reading Lead) have started a Friday lunch time reading club, which has been very popular. The children are enjoying having extra time to read.



Winter Reading challenge

Encourage your child to read more with the Winter Reading Challenge.

Surry Libraries are holding a winter reading challenge. The Winter Mini Challenge is an online, bitesize version of The Reading Agency's annual Summer Reading Challenge. With the holidays approaching, now is the time to encourage children to discover the joy of reading and to build on good reading habits!

It is easy to take part in the Winter Mini Challenge. Children simply read three books or more of their choice between 1 December 2023 and 19 February 2024 and add them to their online profile on wintermini.org.uk. Reaching their reading goal will unlock a limited-edition virtual badge and a special Winter Mini Challenge certificate to print off and keep.

Attendance

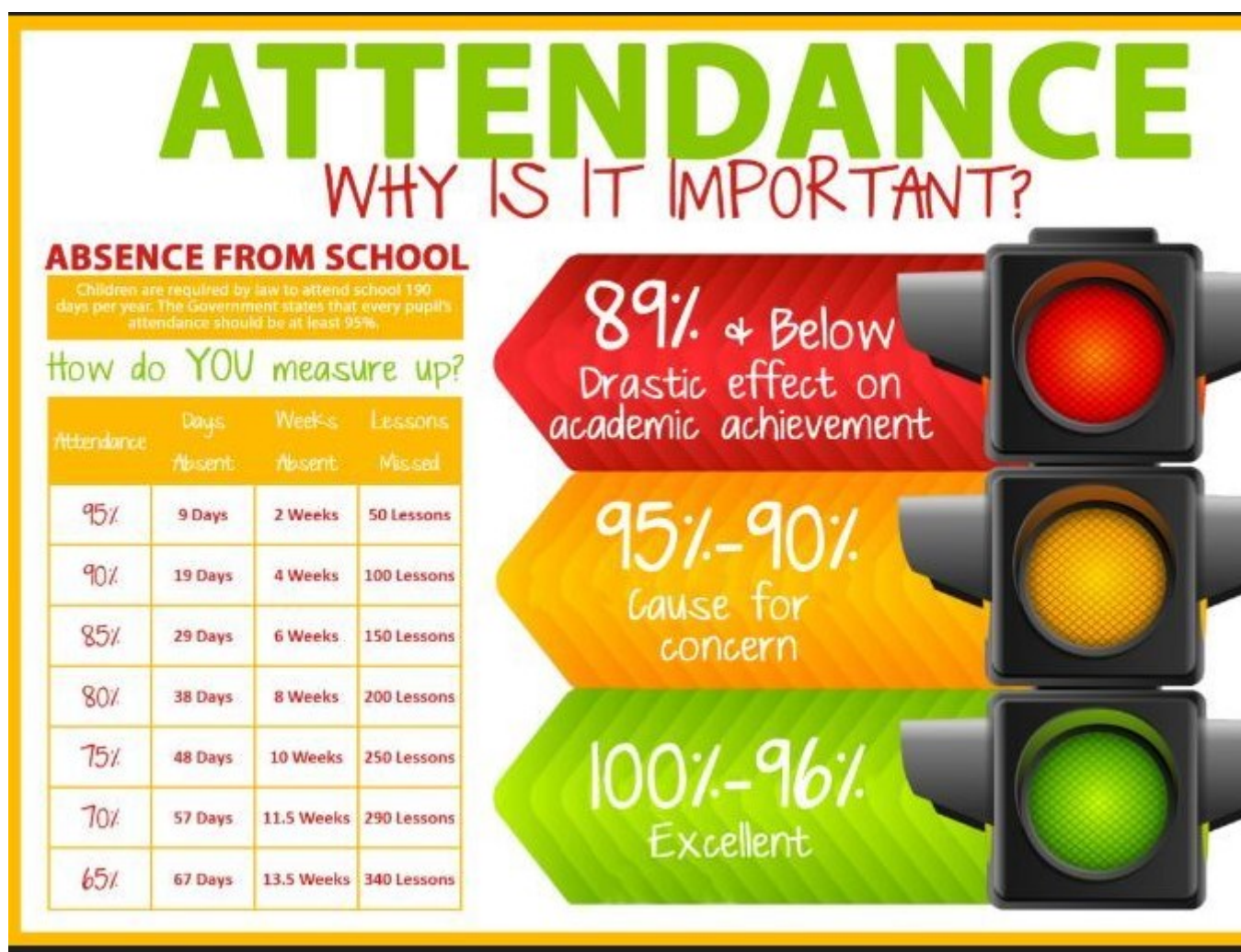
We are delighted to share that the attendance and persistent absence figures for both The Oaktree and The Hermitage Schools have improved dramatically in the past year and I would like to thank all of you, for your support in ensuring your child is not only punctual to school in the mornings, arriving before the register closes, but also attends daily. There are a small number of families we are working with to help bring about greater improvements still, but I attach the poster below to highlight the impact of missing school, whether for a matter of hours each week, one day each week or for weeks in a year.

If ever you are in doubt about whether to keep your child off school or not when poorly please click on the links below to see government guidance and advice. Thank you again for supporting us in making sure we prioritise education in these critical primary years.

[Is my child too ill for school?](#)

[everything you need to know about school attendance](#)

[school attendance and absence](#)



ONLINE SAFETY - HOW OLD SHOULD MY CHILD BE TO USE THAT APP?

With increasing numbers of children accessing iPad's, mobile phones and devices where social media apps can be accessed, we would like to remind all parents of the age restrictions put in place to protect our youngest children. With the advice followed no children in primary settings should have access to the following apps as they are deemed to be inappropriate communication tools for the primary age groups.

We recognise the pressures children and parents are under for their children to "keep up with their friends" or be able to access the social community network and not "miss out" and so we have also shared a link to the NSPCC Keeping children safe online below. This provides advice to parents to minimise the risk of children being negatively impacted by social media.

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/social-media/>

Thank you for helping us to keep your children safe.



Wilder schools Programme

"This year, as part of the [Wilder Schools](#) programme, [Surrey Wildlife Trust](#) will be joining [The Oaktree](#) and [The Hermitage Schools](#) to help students improve their school grounds for nature and take more of their learning outdoors.

Surrey's wildlife is in decline, but by taking some simple actions at home, we can all help create a Nature Recovery Network across the county.

Action for Nature – Give your Garden the Christmas Tweetment!

With the arrival of colder winter weather, our garden birds need all the help they can get.

[Attracting birds to your garden is easy](#): supplement naturally available food with bird food and watch them flock in! Remember to keep feeders and tables clean, so the birds stay healthy and disease-free, and position your feeders in a relatively open area away from predators - the birds will feel safer and visit more! Make sure food (and water!) is available at all times, as birds have different needs throughout the year.



If you don't have your own outdoor space at home, why not [aim for a more sustainable Christmas](#)?

Avoid throwaway plastic, go homemade, and keep wildlife in mind. It'll add a sweet personal touch that'll mean the world to someone this festive season!"



The Children's Commissioner for England has recently launched 'The Big Ambition' to hear directly from children, young people and parents across the country.

We want to hear from all children, in every part of the country and in every setting.

This is your chance to tell key policymakers what is important to you ahead of the general election. Take part now and ensure your needs are reflected in the decisions that will affect you in years to come.

Scan the QR code to
take part



 **CHILDREN'S
COMMISSIONER**

www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/thebigambition



Humaira Ashraf - School Governor



My name is Humaira Ashraf, I have lived in Woking for 8 years and I was delighted to be appointed as a school governor in April 2023. I also work as a non-executive director for South West London and St Georges Mental Health

I have a background in leading education teams and strategic workforce development programmes for a variety of organisations. I have recent experience of working with the Board of Governors at St George's University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, where I was the Director of Education, Culture and Organisational Development.

I am passionate about learning and education as I know that good foundations in education make a positive difference in all our lives. In addition, I have a keen interest in ensuring that the school environment and education delivery is inclusive so that all children regardless of background feel valued, thrive, and can fulfil their potential.

My specific role as a School Governor is focused on the Wellbeing of staff and children.

The Hermitage School

Spring Term 2023/2024

02.01.24	Closed—INSET Day
03.01.24	School Reopens
09.01.24	Prospective Parent Tours 09.30am and 1:30pm
11.01.24	Prospective Parent Tours 09.30am and 1:30pm
15.01.24	Year 6 First Aid Workshop
17.01.24	Chestnut Class Assembly
22.01.24	Art Week
25.01.24	Year 5 Fire Safety Workshop
29.01.24	Life Space Workshops, Year 3, 5 and The Orchard
29.01.24	Year 3 Egyptian Day
30.01.24	Life Space Workshops, Year 3, 5 and The Orchard
31.01.24	Oak Class Assembly
02.02.24	HOPA Quiz Night
07.02.24	Tamarisk Class Assembly
07.02.24	Year 6 Rhoda McGaw Theatre Trip
08.02.24	Year 5 to Hampton Court
09.02.24	Year 5 & 6 Movie Night 3:30—5pm
12.02.24 — 16.02.24	School Closed for Half Term
19.02.24	Closed—INSET Day
26.02.24	Dogs Trust School Workshops
26.02.24	Year 4 Anglo Saxon Day
27.02.24	Dogs Trust School Workshops
28.02.24	Dogs Trust School Workshops
28.02.24	Silver Birch Class Assembly
04.03.24	Book Week
04.03.24	Year 4 and The Orchard Book Look
05.03.24	Year 3 Book Look
06.03.24	SEND Parents /Teacher Consultations
07.03.24	Year 6 Book Look
07.03.24	Bounce for Books
08.03.24	Book Character Dress Up Day
08.03.24	Year 5 Book Look
11.03.24	Science Week
12.03.24	Parent /Teacher Consultations—Virtual
14.03.24	Willow Class Assembly
14.03.24	Parent /Teacher Consultations—Virtual
18.03.24	Year 3 Spring Celebration Assembly
20.03.24—22.02.24	Year 4 Residential to Hindleap Warren
25.03.24	Easter Egg Competition
27.03.24	Talent Show Final to Parents
28.03.24	Last Day of Term—School Finishes at 1:30pm
29.03.24 — 14.04.24	School Closed Easter

The Oaktree School
Spring Term 2023/2024

02.01.24	Closed—INSET Day
03.01.24	School Reopens
09.01.24	Prospective Parent Tours 09.30am and 1:30pm
11.01.24	Prospective Parent Tours 09.30am and 1:30pm
22.01.24	Arts Week
25.01.24	Rabbit Class Assembly
01.02.24	Phonics Check Workshop for Year 1 Parents
02.02.24	HOPA Quiz
12.02.24 — 16.02.24	School Closed for Half Term
19.02.24	Closed—INSET Day
22.02.24	Fox Class Assembly
27.02.24	EYFS Book Celebration
28.02.24	Year 2 Book Celebration
29.02.24	Owl Class Assembly
29.02.24	Year 1 Book Celebration
01.03.24	HOPA Bears at Bedtime
02.03.24	Groundforce Morning
04.03.24	Book Week
06.03.24	SEND Parent Consultations
07.03.24	Bounce for Books
08.03.24	Book Character Dress Up Day
11.03.24	Science Week
12.03.24	Parent / Teacher Consultations—Virtual
14.03.24	Parent / Teacher Consultations—Virtual
21.03.24	Ladybird Class Assembly
22.03.24	Grandparents Festival
28.03.24	Last Day of Term—School Finishes at 1:30pm
29.03.24 — 14.04.23	School Closed Easter

The Hermitage School and The Oaktree School
Term dates and INSET days for 2023-24

	23 rd – 27 th October	AUTUMN HALF TERM
Monday	30 th October	SCHOOL CLOSED - INSET DAY
Tuesday	31 st October	First day of Autumn Term 2
Friday	15 th December	Last day of Autumn Term 2
Spring Term 2024		
Tuesday	2 nd January	SCHOOL CLOSED - INSET DAY
Wednesday	3 rd January	First day of Spring Term 1
Friday	9 th February	Last day of Spring Term 1
	12 th – 16 th February	SPRING HALF TERM
Monday	19 th February	SCHOOL CLOSED – INSET DAY
Tuesday	20 th February	First day of Spring Term 2
Thursday	28 th March	Last day of Spring Term 2
Summer Term 2024		
Monday	15 th April	First day of Summer Term 1
Monday	6 th May	May Day Bank Holiday
Friday	24 th May	Last day of Summer Term 1
	27 th May – 7 th June	SUMMER HALF TERM
Monday	3 rd June	First day of Summer Term 2
Monday	22 nd July	Last Day of Summer Term 2
Tuesday	23 rd July	SCHOOL CLOSED - INSET DAY