



Aston St. Mary's Newsletter

Our value this half term is **Forgiveness**

www.astonmarys.herts.sch.uk

13th March 2026

Every child is a treasure - small in size, growing in God's love.

Diary Dates

Thursday 19th March – Haffydown Class trip
(Climb Quest)

Thursday 26th March – Rock Steady Concert

Friday 27th March – Easter Service 9:30am

Spring term finishes at 1pm.

Tuesday 14th April - Children return to school

Wednesday 15th April – Year Five walk to
Astonbury woods

Monday 11th May – Thursday 14th May – Year
Six SATs assessments

Friday 15th May – Sports Day (PM)

Thursday 21st May – Open Afternoon
(2:00pm-3:15pm)

Friday 22nd May – Reserve Sports Day (PM)

Monday 25th May – Friday 29th May – Half
Term Week

Thursday 4th June – Shackadell Class to
Hertfordshire Zoo

Monday 15th June – Friday 19th June – Year
Six Bikeability

Monday 22nd June – Music Evening (6pm)

Thursday 25th June – Class Photos

Wednesday 1st July – Danes and Puddlebridge
Classes to Wicksteed Park

Monday 6th July – Haffydown Class to Celtic
Harmony

Tuesday 7th July – Intervillage Sports Event

Monday 13th July – Year Six Leavers' Trip (PM)

Tuesday 14th July – Whole School Production
1:30pm and 6pm

Wednesday 15th July – Whole School
Production 6pm

Friday 17th July – Last day of summer term
9:30am Leavers' Service

1:00pm School finishes

At last, it has begun to really feel like spring is here; it has been wonderful to see the children enjoying time outside on our school field – at breaktime, lunchtime and also as part of their planned learning. Our **orienteering** course is a particular favourite – both within PE lessons and to support learning across the curriculum.

This half term, our value is **forgiveness**. Learning to forgive is vital for personal growth and creating a positive, respectful community. In our daily worship, we have been engaging in discussions and listening to stories to better understand the power of forgiving others. Forgiveness helps build stronger relationships, reduces anger, and promotes kindness. We encourage families to continue this conversation at home – there are some ideas at the end of this newsletter.

A highlight of our school calendar is always **World Book Day** which took place last week. The children enjoyed an exciting journey around the globe, travelling with their special passports and exploring stories set in every continent. Each class focused on a different country, and pupils visited these destinations in their house teams, discovering new cultures, characters, and adventures along the way. By the end of the day, the hall was filled with a wonderful display showcasing learning from across the school. We also held a successful book swap, giving pre-loved books the chance to be shared, enjoyed, and treasured by new readers. Please take a look at the class pages to find out more about the books and activities that the children enjoyed.

A big thank you to all the parents and carers who attended **Parents' Evening** this week. We truly appreciate your participation and engagement in your child's learning journey. The evenings provided a chance for teachers to share valuable insights into children's academic progress, personal development, and areas for growth. We believe that the strong partnership between school and home plays a critical role in fostering a positive learning environment, and we are grateful to all families for their continued support and involvement.

We wish everyone a happy and relaxing weekend.

ACADEMIC YEAR 2025/2026

SPRING TERM

Tuesday 6th January 2026 to Friday 27th March 2026

SUMMER TERM

Tuesday 14th April 2026 to Friday 17th July 2026

Bank Holiday – Monday 4th May 2026 – School closed

Half term – Monday 25th May 2026 – Friday 29th May 2026

INSET DAYS (School closed)

Inset day – Monday 13th April 2026

Inset day – Monday 20th and Tuesday 21st July 2026

ACADEMIC YEAR 2026/2027

AUTUMN TERM

Wednesday 2nd September 2026 to Friday 18th December 2026

Half Term – Monday 26th October 2026-Friday 30th October 2026

Occasional Day Monday 30th November 2026
– School closed

SPRING TERM

Tuesday 5th January 2027 to Thursday 25th March 2027

Half Term – Monday 15th February 2027– Friday 19th February 2027

SUMMER TERM

Tuesday 13th April 2027 to Tuesday 20th July 2027

Bank Holiday – Monday 3rd May 2027 – School closed

Half term – Monday 31st May 2027 – Friday 4th June 2027

INSET DAYS (School closed)

Inset day – Tuesday 1st September 2026

Occasional day – Monday 30th November 2026

Inset day – Monday 4th January 2027

Inset day – Monday 12th April 2027

Inset day – Wednesday 21st, Thursday 22nd July 2027

School Meals

To order school meals, please log onto your School Gateway account via the website or the app.

DINNER MONEY FEES £3.55 per meal

PLEASE NOTE: From 1st April 2026, the price per meal will increase to £3.65.



Please be reminded that you can use the closed email address should you need to contact us out of hours.

closed@astonmarys.herts.sch.uk

A Thought about Forgiveness:

In the Gospel of Gospel of Matthew (18:21–22), Jesus Christ tells Peter to forgive “seventy-seven times.” In other words, forgiveness is not about keeping count - it is about keeping our hearts open. In our community, we will sometimes misunderstand one another, make mistakes, or fall short. Forgiveness reminds us that we belong to God and to each other, not because we are perfect, but because we are loved. When we forgive, we reflect the mercy God shows us every day.

Gracious God,

Thank you for loving us with patience and kindness.

When we are hurt, help us to forgive.

When we are wrong, give us humility to say sorry.

Make our school a place of grace, where mercy is stronger than mistakes and love always has the final word.

Amen.



House Points

Canterbury



328

St. Paul's



296

St. Albans



355

Coventry



285

Notices

Aston's Talent Show

Friday evening's talent show was truly amazing, filled with excitement, applause, and an incredible display of courage. So many children took part, each bringing a different talent to the stage - from singing and dancing to comedy acts, gymnastics, football skills, Muay Thai, many impressive musical performances and even poetry and science. The variety made the whole evening feel lively and special, as every performance was unique in its own way. It was wonderful to see the confidence shining through, despite the nerves that so many must have felt. Standing up in front of a big audience is not easy, and every single performer was incredibly brave. The cheers and support from friends, family, and staff made it a night to remember for everyone involved.

Thank you to the PTFA for all their hard work to organise such a wonderful event and for giving so many children the opportunity to perform. In particular, thanks should go to Aveta and Mike for arranging the venue and technical support as well as to Rosie and Becky for all their hard work to organise the event, tickets etc. Thank you also to Lara for teaching and accompanying some of the musicians and to the panel of professionals who provided such supportive feedback to the performers. We would also like to extend our thanks to The Nobel School, and in particular Mr Hardy and Ms Parsley, for allowing us to use their amazing venue and facilities and supporting on the evening.



Notices

Basketball Finals



Following their previous success earlier in the term, our Year Six Basketball Team reached the Stevenage finals, where they competed at Barnwell School on February 25th. They were certainly up against some tough competition. We are so proud of the effort and energy they put into every game that they played, and also of their encouragement and support for each other. The teams were organised into two groups of four; in our group we drew two matches and were narrowly defeated in the other. We ended up 6th out of the twelve schools in the whole competition despite being up against many much larger schools. Well done to Ethan, James, Theo, Keely, Jasmine and Darcie; you really did make us proud and were excellent ambassadors for our school.

Keeping Children Safe

Parents will have received an email earlier this week about a concerning social media trend sometimes referred to as “**Red vs Blue School Wars.**”

Although it mainly involves older pupils, messages online encourage young people to take part in conflicts between schools.

We would like to remind families to talk with children about staying safe online and not sharing or engaging with messages that promote violence. If your child sees anything online that worries them, please encourage them to speak to a trusted adult. Our priority, as always, is keeping our pupils safe and promoting kindness and respect.

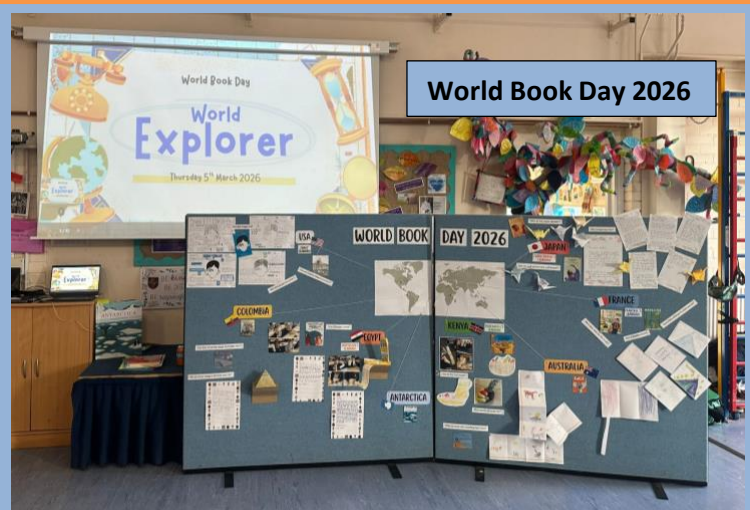
Attendance

We are delighted that our attendance so far this year is an **impressive 97.6%** (compared to 94.6% nationally). This means that vast majority of our children will be accessing the full curriculum without gaps in their learning.

A special well done to the 43% of our children who have in excess of 99% attendance so far this year.

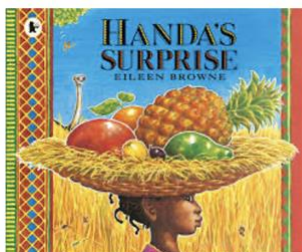


Aston St. Mary's is a NUT and SESAME FREE ZONE. Please ensure that packed lunches do not contain any products containing nuts or sesame (including products such as Nutella, humus, tahini and sesame seeds on bread/breadsticks).



Class News

Shackadell Class



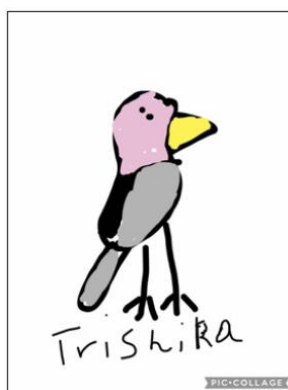
Shackadell class loved celebrating World Book Day. The whole school theme was "Around the World". The children were each given a passport and visited different countries in different classrooms throughout the day. At each country they visited, they heard a story from that country and got a stamp on their passport.

In the afternoon, we focused on our class story, **Handa's Surprise**, and looked at the country Kenya. We looked at pictures of the small villages in Kenya, as well as the capital city Nairobi. The children then sequenced pictures from the story, made their own story book and drew beautiful pictures on the fruits that were in the story.



After drawing our fruits, we had a wonderful time sampling them! The most popular fruits were definitely the oranges and mangoes.

We also practised our drawing skills, but this time digitally! We have been drawing animals that are native to Kenya using an app and some special pens.



Class News

Peartree Class

What a day we all had on World Book Day and our travels around the world. Peartree was transformed into France for the day. Everyone came to visit us for 'A Walk in Paris' by Salvatore Rubbino. It followed the journey of a little girl and her grandfather as they spent a day admiring the sights.

Our class book 'Madeline' by Ludwig Bemelmans was about a little girl and her 11 classmates which went everywhere in two straight lines. We set the class up so that the children had to sit in lines of two. The children thought it was great. We enjoyed lots of colouring and craft activities, we wrote postcards about our 'time in France' and we tasted delicious French foods, such as French bread, cheeses, croissants and brioche. We even used our maths skills to measure and weigh out ingredients and time and temperature to cook lovely madeleine cakes and crepes.

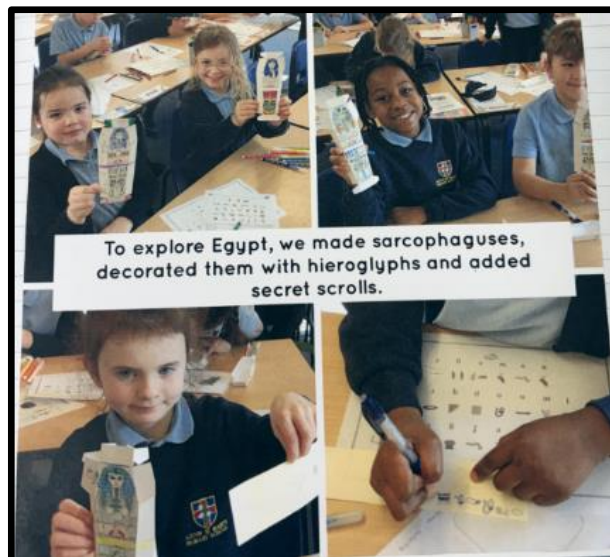
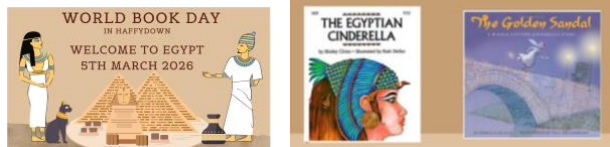
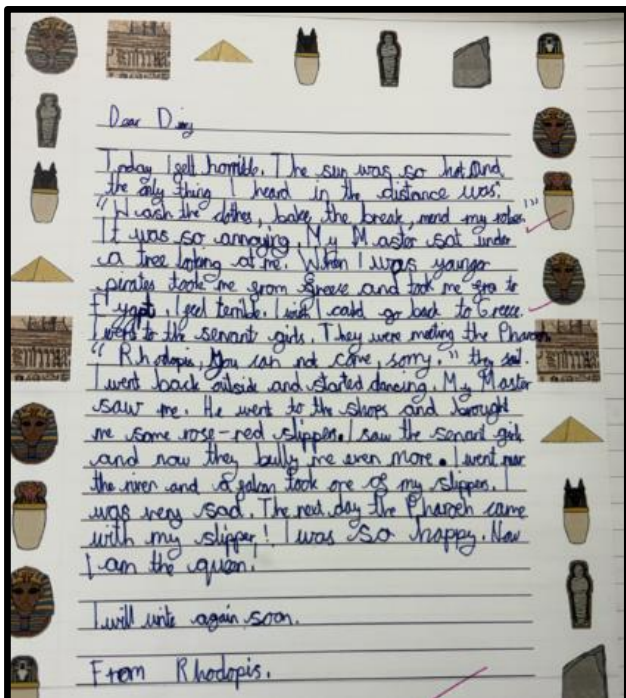
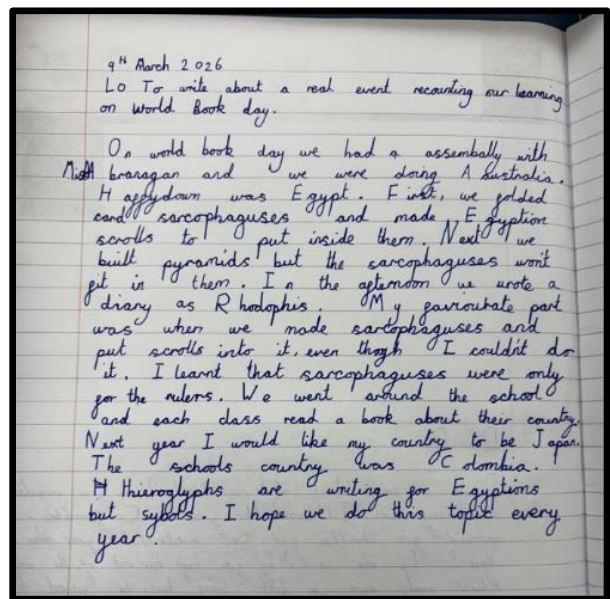
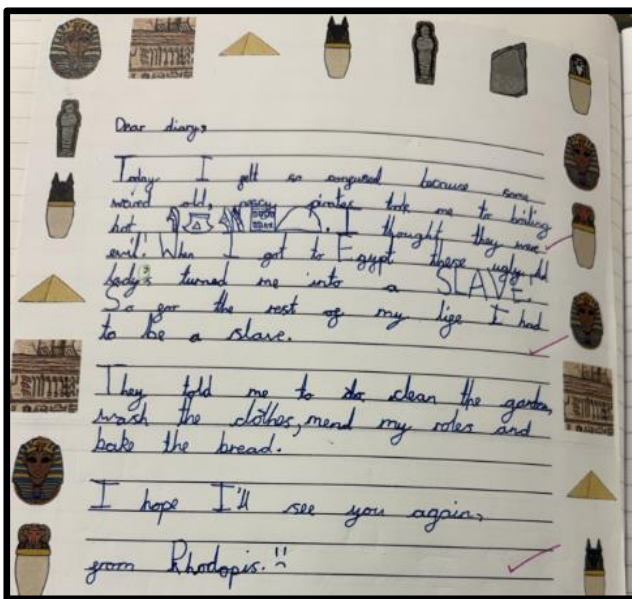


Class News

Haffydown Class

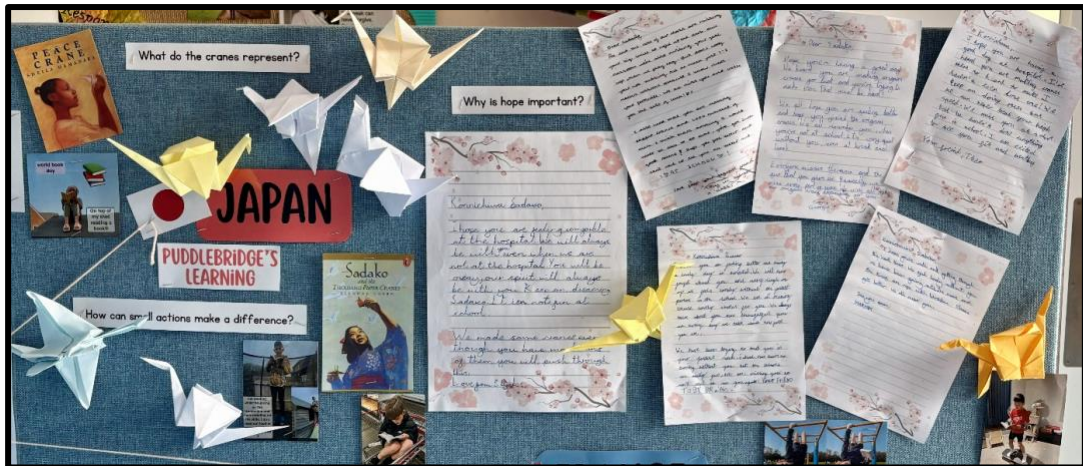
Last Thursday, we celebrated World Book Day with an exciting journey around the world! The children travelled between different classrooms, collecting stamps in their passports as they explored stories from different countries. Haffydown was transformed into Ancient Egypt, where we read **The Golden Sandal by Rebecca Hickox** and **The Egyptian Cinderella by Shirley Climo**. After finishing our exploring, we returned to Haffydown to discover sarcophaguses, papyrus scrolls and hieroglyphs hidden around the classroom. We created tombs for our main character, Rhodopis, decorating our sarcophaguses with hieroglyphs and filling them with secret scrolls. The children also built their own pyramids, each with hidden messages underneath. After lunch, we wrote a secret diary entry from Rhodopis, imagining her life first as a slave and then as a princess. It was a fantastic day of creativity and imagination. We even overheard some lovely comments from the children, including "This is the best day ever! I love World Book Day!" and "I wish we could do this everyday!"

This week, we reflected on our journey and the fun we had by writing recounts of our adventures. A huge thank you to Miss Branagan for organising such fun and memorable activities for us this year!



Class News

Puddlebridge Class



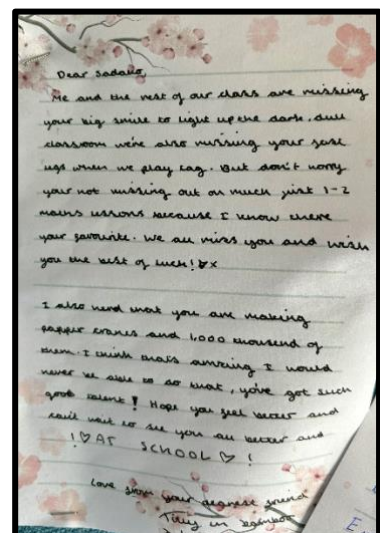
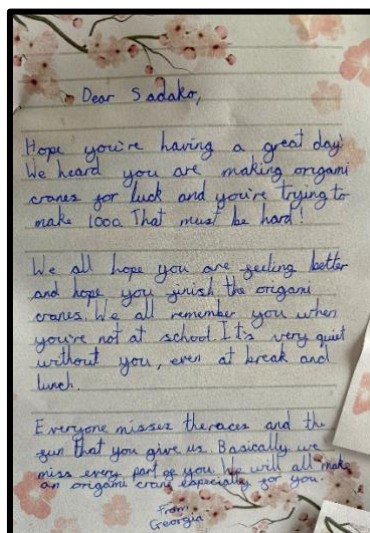
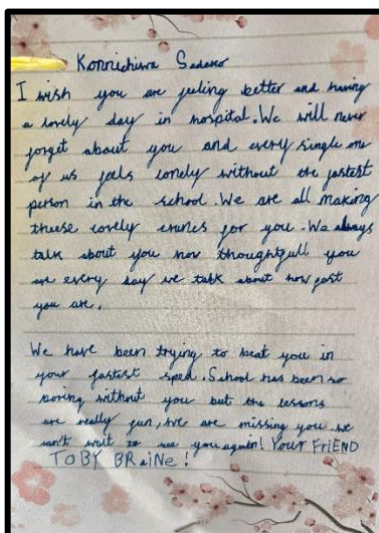
In Puddlebridge this World Book Day, we travelled to Japan through our reading and learning.

During the house carousel, the whole school listened to the beautiful story **Peace Crane by Sheila Hamanaka**. Inspired by the true story of Sadako Sasaki, the book shares a powerful message about hope, courage and the importance of working towards peace in our world. The story reminds us that even small acts of kindness and determination can help spread a message of peace across the world.



Back in class, Puddlebridge learned more about Sadako by reading **Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes by Eleanor Coerr**. The book tells the true story of Sadako, a young girl who lived in Hiroshima and became ill years after the atomic bomb during the Second World War. While in hospital, Sadako learned about the Japanese legend that anyone who folds one thousand paper cranes will be granted a wish. Determined and hopeful, Sadako began folding cranes and wished for health and peace for the world.

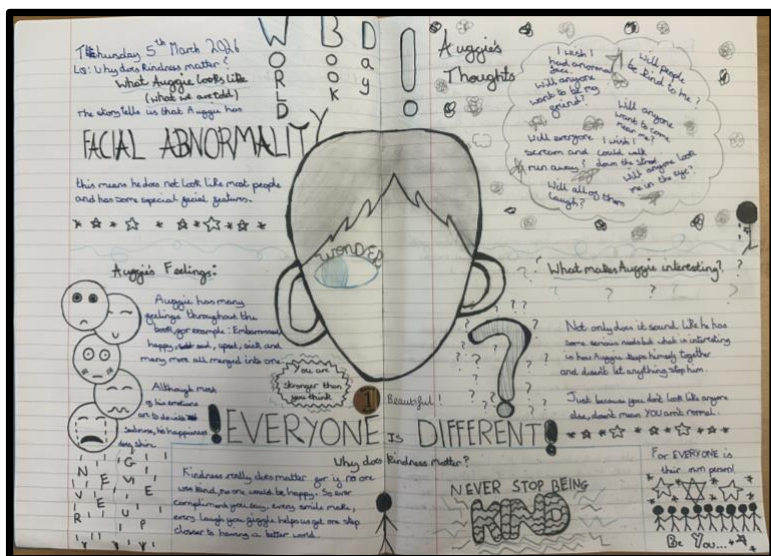
As part of our learning, we wrote a letter to Sadako from the point of view of one of her classmates, imagining how they might have supported and encouraged her. We also tried making our own origami cranes inspired by her story. This was quite tricky and required lots of careful folding and concentration, but with perseverance and teamwork we managed it. Our cranes are a symbol of hope and peace, just like Sadako's.



Class News

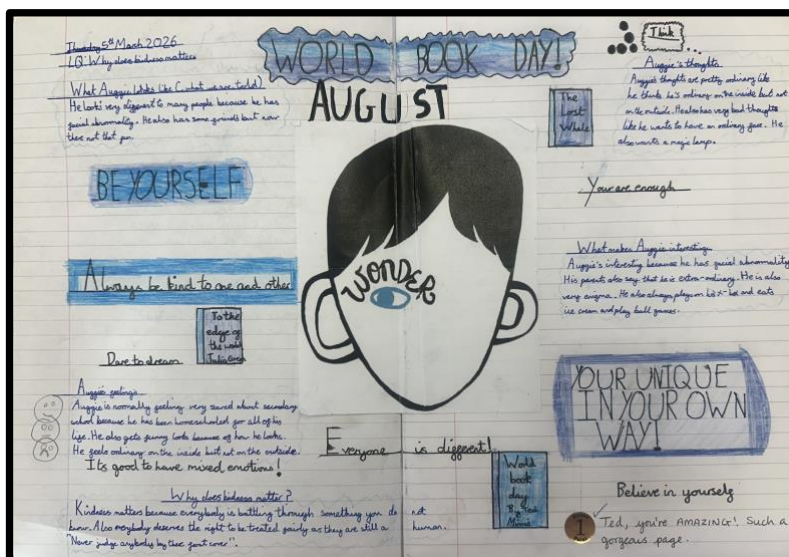
Danes Class

What a wonderful day we had in Danes class on **World Book Day!**



Our day began exploring the world in house groups - it was lovely to enjoy books celebrating a wide variety of cultures with younger children from across the school. In Danes class - or should we say America - Miss Azzopardi read *The Invisible Boy* by Trudy Ludwig. This poignant book tells the story of Brian, a quiet boy who feels invisible because his classmates ignore him and leave him out of activities. Everything changes when a new student, Justin, arrives. Brian is the first person to show Justin kindness. Justin includes Brian in a group project, and gradually the other students begin to notice and appreciate Brian too. This text inspired lots of thoughtful discussion.

After break, it was time to explore America in more depth as a class. Our stimuli was R. J. Palacio's *Wonder*. We read just the opening chapter - a very short but powerful start before exploring the protagonist (Auggie) further. We approached the opening to the story with incredible thoughtfulness and maturity; we shared insightful ideas about the themes, showing great empathy and curiosity as we discussed the challenges faced by Auggie. It was fantastic to see such engaged conversations and careful reflection.



To finish our learning, we took some time to reflect on the **learning question: why does kindness matter?** We are very proud of our double-page spreads showcasing our **World Book Day** learning and can't wait to continue reading *Wonder* together over the coming weeks!

To make the most of the glorious sunshine, we spent a little bit of time outside reading for pleasure at the end of the day. All in all, it was a **fun-filled day celebrating books!**



FORGIVENESS

HOME SCHOOL VALUES

This term we will be focussing in school on the value FORGIVENESS. We hope your family will find these ideas helpful as you explore the value and have fun together.

TALK TOGETHER about Forgiveness

Everyone makes mistakes, it's part of being human. Sometimes our mistakes hurt others and then we need to say sorry. Sometimes mistakes made by other people hurt us. When this happens we need to be able to **forgive**. **Forgiveness** can be difficult and costly but without it a new start is impossible.

Talk together about:

- A time when you needed to say sorry
- A time you didn't say sorry but wish you had
- A time when you had to **forgive** someone who had hurt or upset you
- How it feels when you are given a new start because someone has **forgiven** you

THINK TOGETHER Words of Wisdom

"Without **forgiveness** there is no future.... If you can **forgive**, then you can move on and even help the person you are forgiving to become a better person"

Desmond Tutu



HOME-SCHOOL CHALLENGE

Maze

Design your own version of the maze tree in the story of Zacchaeus.

You can either draw it on paper or use other materials to create it. It's up to you! Take it to school to display in the Challenge Gallery.



READ TOGETHER...

Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

Zacchaeus was a little man. He was a tax collector and had become rich by making others pay lots of money in taxes to the Romans and to him. He didn't have many friends.

When Zacchaeus heard Jesus was in town, he wanted to see him. But Zacchaeus was short and Jesus was always surrounded by a crowd. So Zacchaeus decided to run ahead of the crowd and climb a sycamore tree. From there he could watch for Jesus. As Jesus drew closer, he held his breath excitedly until Jesus stopped right beneath his tree. Jesus looked straight up at him! "Zacchaeus," said Jesus with a smile, "come on down. I want to stay at your house today!"

Zacchaeus hopped down. "You are welcome at my house, Jesus," he said with a huge grin.

But others grumbled, muttering to each other. "Why does Jesus want to go home with the rich, cheating tax collector? He isn't good enough for Jesus to come and stay at his house."

Zacchaeus heard what the people were saying about him and he wanted to put things right. He turned to Jesus and said, "Master, here and now, I promise to give half of my money to the poor. If I have cheated anyone in taxes, I will pay them back four times that amount."

Zacchaeus wanted to turn over a new leaf because Jesus believed that everyone deserved a new start and now Zacchaeus believed it too!

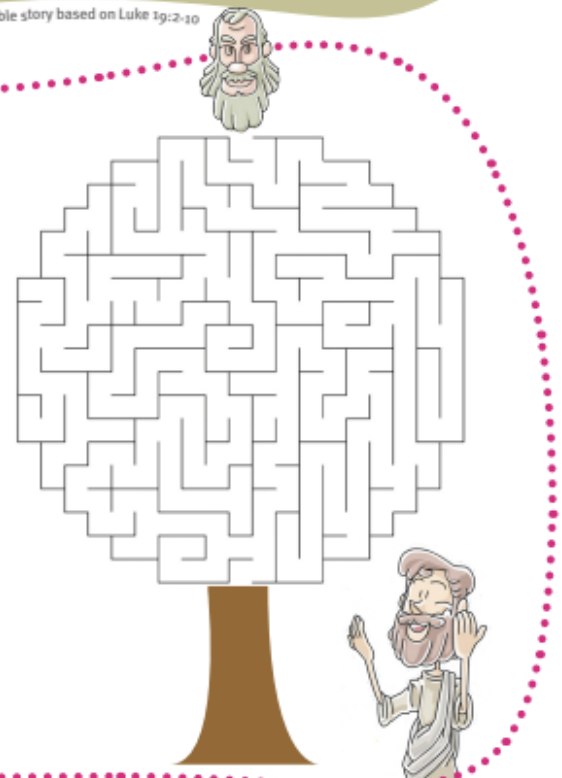
bible story based on Luke 19:2-10



QUIZ

Tree Maze

Help Zacchaeus find his way down from the top of the tree, to meet Jesus.





HALL OF FAME

Desmond Tutu

Desmond Tutu was Archbishop of Capetown from 1986 to 1996. Throughout his life Desmond Tutu worked tirelessly against apartheid in South Africa. Apartheid was a system that treated people differently because of the colour of their skin. People who were non-white were not given the same rights in the country as white citizens. For example they had to live where the government told them to, they were not allowed to vote, had to use separate transport, go to different beaches and use separate sports facilities.



There was much violence and oppression in South Africa during the years of apartheid, and when it finally ended in 1992 some people were left feeling bitter and angry and wanting revenge. In order to give everyone a chance to talk about the things that had happened to them Desmond Tutu set up the 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission'. Many people who had behaved badly could hear from those they had hurt. There was the chance to say sorry and sometimes receive **forgiveness**. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission helped to provide an opportunity for a new beginning for South Africa, a chance to build what Desmond Tutu called a 'Rainbow Nation' in which everyone had the same chance in life no matter what the colour of their skin.



FASCINATING FACTS

Crosses across the world

The cross is a very special symbol for Christians it reminds them of Jesus' death on the cross which brought **forgiveness** for the world.

Different shapes and designs of crosses reflect different traditions and communities across the world.

Maria Gomez was a Christian Primary School teacher in El Salvador. She angered the authorities in her country because she campaigned for the rights of poor people. Eventually she was murdered. Later a local artist was commissioned to paint a wooden cross with scenes showing her life and her work among the poor women in the rural villages of El Salvador.



The Celtic cross originates from Ireland. St Patrick described the circle on the cross as symbolising the endless love shown by Jesus. The cross is decorated with natural shapes and animals to remind us of God's creation.

The Black and White cross comes from South Africa and was designed during the time of apartheid. The Bible teaches that people are equal in God's eyes, no matter what their background or the colour of their skin.



The Jewish New Year Tradition

New Year for Jews normally falls during September. On the first afternoon of the new year, the festival of Rosh Hashanah is celebrated. Families visit a nearby stream, river or even the sea for the ritual of Tashlich (in Hebrew, the language in which the Jews' holy book the Torah was written, Tashlich means throw away).

After a celebration meal Jewish families gather left over breadcrumbs. These crumbs represent the words or deeds that each family member feels sorry about. When the crumbs have been thrown into the water, fish eat them or they are washed away. This symbolises the way that God **forgives** the bad things that people have done and washes them away so that there can be a fresh start for the New Year. During the ceremony the following words from the Torah are read aloud, "You (God) will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our transgressions into the depths of the sea." Micah 7: 19

Spring Term Workshops 2026 for parents in Hertfordshire



Anxiety around ADHD

Wednesday 18 March 7pm to 9pm

Thursday 26 March 9.30am to 11.30am

Empowering Parenting

Friday 20 March 9.30am to 11.30am

Its a Dads Life

Tuesday 24 March 7pm to 9pm

For more information, you can scan our QR code to make a referral or call Louise and Lesley on **0204 522 8700/8701** or email services@familylives.org.uk.



We build better family lives together

www.familylives.org.uk



@FamilyLivesHertsandBeds

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Hertfordshire
County Council



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HATFIELD NETBALL CLUB

EASTER NETBALL CAMP

YEARS 3-6

30-31 MARCH & 1 APRIL

10AM - 3PM

LEAD COACH: EMILY DRACKFORD

ASSISTANT COACHES: COUNTY PLAYERS



1 day

£40

2 day

£70

3 day

£100

Activities

- ✓ Tactical attacking
- ✓ Defending
- ✓ Shooting drills
- ✓ Fitness
- ✓ Match play

Marriotts School

Brittain Way,
Stevenage SG2 8BL

Wrap around sporting care available:

9-10am and 3-4pm -
£5/hr

Register interest:

HatfieldNetballCamps@gmail.com

