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# Newsletter

22<sup>nd</sup> May 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

We enjoyed spending more time outdoors this half term. At the start of the half term, the children sowed our wildflower meadow and helped to water and care for it along with the planters on the school playground. A number of our families also joined us on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May for our second family gardening session. You can find out more about the work carried out so far in the newsletter. Thank you, Mrs Devonshire, and everyone who has given their time to help with the project - the school grounds are looking lovely.

Linked to the project, we were delighted to welcome Mr Giles Groom from Vanstone Park Garden Centre in Codicote to our final Celebration assembly of the half term. Vanstone Park is also celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, and Giles supported our biodiversity project by offering discounted plants and contributing resources towards the project. After the assembly, a number of our children and Mrs Devonshire showed Giles around the school and our grounds. He was very impressed with the children's love of the school and the work completed in our outdoor areas. We look forward to continuing the special link we have with Giles and Vanstone Park.

It was a very busy half term for our Year 6 pupils as they prepared for the Year 6 SATs. SATs week was during the week beginning 11<sup>th</sup> May and we were very proud of the way all of our Year 6 children approached the tests. They worked hard all year, and during the tests everyone had a positive attitude and ensured they tried their very best. I know the children are now looking forward to participating in the school production and their residential visit to Overstrand in July.

Next half term, weather permitting, the children will participate in our school sports mornings. Sports morning for our Early Years children is planned for Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June, and for Years 1 to 6 it will be on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> June. For the last two years, the children have been involved in planning and leading the events with support from our sports coaches and adults in school and will do so again this year. We are looking forward to welcoming our families to the sports events.

Finally, to mark the end of our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, the children and staff are planning a school summer fair. The event will take place on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July. The children are planning their own stalls and there will be the usual raffles and BBQ. We would be very grateful to receive good quality donations for the stalls and the raffles, such as sealed bottles, unwanted gifts, books, cuddlies, toys and games, so if you have items you no longer need, please bring them to school!

You will receive a letter with further details about the event and suggested items for donation next week. In the meantime, if you would like to help out at the fair, please let Mrs Albone or Miss Drake know. All help will be gratefully received.

I hope the children have a restful holiday and I look forward to seeing you all again on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June.

Best wishes,

*Elaine Close*

Headteacher

## YEAR 6 NEWS

We are incredibly proud of the children and the positive attitude, resilience and determination they showed in the lead-up to, and during, the SATs tests. They approached the week with maturity and gave their very best effort throughout.

Alongside this, we have been enjoying our learning about wars and the circulatory system. The children have shown great curiosity and enthusiasm in lessons, asking thoughtful questions and making excellent connections in their learning.

In PE, we have been playing lots of rounders and developing our teamwork, coordination and game sense. During SATs week, we also enjoyed creating our new pop art-inspired butterfly display, which has brightened up our classroom beautifully.

*Mrs Freeston and Miss Segard*

## YEAR 5 NEWS

Summer 1 started with the Year 5s (and 6s) taking part in the K'Nex STEM Challenge. The children collaborated really well with their partners to create rockets with detachable boosters. They also listened extremely well and used a range of STEM skills by asking questions, testing and evaluating throughout. The K'Nex lead complimented us on how well the children participated in the challenge and agreed to come back to discuss their work as an architect as part of the Year 5's DT module.

In English, the children worked on a suspenseful short story inspired by 'The Boy in the Tower', while we worked on fractions, decimals and percentages in maths. In science, we are working on human ageing and development, which we will continue to do after half-term. So far, the children are handling this with admirable maturity. Our geography topic of 'Sow, Grow and Farm' will also continue in Summer 2, including our trip to Hertfordshire Schools Food and Farm Day.

As part of their DT unit on architecture, Year 5 were visited by an engineer and architect from Croudace Homes. Laretta and Deenesh spoke to the children about the path they took to their jobs and some of the things their jobs involved.

Following this, the children were given the task to design a new housing estate, which included a community centre, recreation spaces and a drainage space among other things. The children were a credit to themselves and the school.

We are hoping to invite more people working in STEM to speak to, and hopefully inspire, children throughout the school. If you or anyone you know are interested in doing this, please contact us.



Please let us know if you have any questions about the work we will be doing in Summer 2. We hope you all have a lovely half-term.

*Mr Chan, Mrs Geddis, Miss Watson, Miss McMenamin & Miss Kadiri*

## YEAR 4 NEWS

Year 4 have had a good half-term and have been enjoying our learning topics. We have been working hard in all areas of the curriculum and are gaining confidence in our abilities. In English, we have been developing our story writing skills, linked to our class book, 'Leon and the Place Between'. In Maths, we have been getting more confident with our times tables and solving problems using written methods of calculation. In D&T, we have completed a fabric design using embroidery stitches, inspired by William Morris. We have been learning about states of matter in our Science lessons, and are enjoying learning about ancient civilisations in History. We are looking forward to visiting North Hertfordshire Museum in Hitchin, to learn about life in Ancient Egypt.

*Mrs Devonshire and Miss Rasool*

## YEAR 3 NEWS

Year 3 jumped right into the summer term with lots of new learning and things to look forward to. We have fully embraced learning about the Romans. We were fortunate enough to have Cas from Hitchin Museum with us to lead a workshop and teach the children how to sketch artefacts. A week later, the children enjoyed our trip to the Verulamium Museum in St. Albans. They had the chance to explore the museum and learn lots about Roman markets. I know a highlight for some of the children was seeing real-life Roman mosaics!

*Mrs Boshoff, Mrs Hearson and Miss Noble*

## YEAR 2 NEWS

Year 2 have continued to learn like the superstars they are! We really enjoyed finding out about the Bayeux Tapestry in our history lessons and how it shows the story of the Battle of Hastings. We have also enjoyed finding out about animal survival and look forward to our visit from Safari Stu later in the term.

Pokémon Club continues to be lots of fun. We have crowned many new tournament champions and learnt our times tables rather well along the way!

*Mr Phillips and Mrs Wilson*

## YEAR 1 NEWS

Year 1 have had another great half term and they are all of a sudden looking very grown up! The children have thought really carefully during Mental Health week and have spent time discussing the things they do to help their mental health. The children grew their own sunflower seeds for our sunflower growing competition.

They have enjoyed our new topic called School Days and are beginning to learn about what it was like for children in Victorian times. They will continue with this topic after half term. The children were proud of their writing they did around poems. Well done everyone. 😊

*Ms Gunther, Mrs Jones and Mrs Fearn*

## Diary Dates

An up-to-date list of diary dates is included with this newsletter.

## RECEPTION NEWS

Reception have really enjoyed our Animal Safari topic this half term! We have been looking after some caterpillars, had a visit from Speedy the Tortoise during pet week, and finished this half term with a wonderful visit from Herring Green Falconry Centre. The children have been working really hard in maths, consolidating their learning on shape, counting beyond 10 and taking part in activities during their CHIL time. We introduced the Rainbow Challenge this half term, and the children have amazed us with how eager they are to participate in the weekly challenges to complete their rainbow! We look forward to our last half term together, with some fun activities planned.

*Miss Webster, Miss Sawyer and Mrs Willis*

## NURSERY NEWS

We started learning phonics this half term in Nursery and the children have amazed us with how excited and engaged they have been to learn a new letter every day. This is evident in their play and they are always proudly showing us what they have written on white boards, in shaving foam or even in the sand!

Our topic this half term has been animals and our highlights have been seeing Speedy the tortoise, the Herring Green Falconry visit and writing our very own version of Dear Zoo! The children did a great job of thinking of different animals the zoo might send and why we should send them back! It's so lovely to see them reading it when they are playing.

We also really enjoyed trying different fruits from the story The Very Hungry Caterpillar. The children all surprised us by liking the nice green (spinach) leaf!

*Mrs Denton, Mrs Anderson and Mrs Jones*

## Governor News

This term the governors are continuing to explore how Writing is developed across the year groups and across all curriculum subjects. We also observed the delivery of the Year 6 SATs and gathered feedback from the Year 6 pupils about how they have found the experience of taking their SATs tests.



### No Tech Zone

Children are not permitted to bring iPads or tablets onto the school site.

Parents may request permission for children in Years 5 and 6 who walk home on their own to bring a phone to school, which must be handed in on arrival at school.

## Nursery September 2026

We still have a few places available in our Nursery for September 2026. If you have a child born between 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 and are looking for a Nursery place, please complete the application form below:

[Click here to go to Nursery 2026 application form](#)

## Family Support Worker News

This half term we ran two Lego Therapy groups at lunch time. The children taking part have demonstrated excellent collaboration skills, working together to create their Lego model. They've experienced frustrations and successes, and have been excellent problem solvers. Well done!

We have celebrated Mental Health Awareness Week, drawing attention to how small actions can make a big difference, for ourselves and those around us. We finished off the week by wearing something green to school, a small action that shows support for mental health awareness. If you would like information or support for mental health concerns, please do get in touch. Mrs Burnett is a Mental Health First Aider and can offer a friendly listening ear and signposting to additional support services when needed.

If you ever have any concerns about your child's wellbeing, please don't hesitate to get in touch with either Mrs Burnett or Mrs Read - we're here to help.

We welcomed Kate Beed from North Herts Citizen's Advice Bureau into school for an afternoon. She was available for parents to drop in and ask questions on a wide range of issues, including finances, wellbeing, debt, relationships and employment. We are so fortunate to have her available exclusively for our families. She will be in school again next half term, so watch out for the date and drop in to see her.

We have a large selection on good quality pre-loved uniform for sale every Wednesday morning in the Community Room. Please do drop in and grab yourself a bargain!

### **Attendance Matters**

142 pupils have attendance of 95% and above, and 22 pupils have 100% attendance this year so far. Thank you for your continued efforts to maintain a positive attitude to school attendance. Please look on the Arbor app for your child's current attendance percentage, and use the attached Attendance Ladder to see where you fit.

*Mrs Grace Read and Mrs Vicki Burnett*

## Please remember ...

If the hot weather continues into the second half of the summer term, please remember to send your child to school every day with a sunhat and water bottle, with sunscreen applied before leaving home.

## Clubs Complete

Our after school club is run by Clubs Complete and is open until 5.30 pm. If you would like to book a place for your child at after school club, please click the link below:

[Click here to go to Clubs Complete](#)

## Breakfast Club

Our Breakfast Club is open from 8 a.m. every day. It is open for all children, from Nursery to Year 6, and there is no need to book. Your child does not need to use Breakfast Club every day - just use it when you need it. Payment for Breakfast Club is made on your child's Arbor account.

## Biodiversity Project

As I'm sure you are all aware, to mark Stonehill's 50th Anniversary, we have been undertaking a number of nature projects to improve biodiversity on the school site.

All the children in school have helped to sprinkle some seeds in the area we have designated as a wildflower meadow.

In addition to this, we have held two Saturday morning gardening sessions for families to work together to fill four wooden planters in the main playground and plant them with beautiful flowers and small shrubs.

We have also started work on a mini wetland area. This will be completed on our third family gardening session, to be held on Saturday 13th June between 9am and 12 noon. (more details to follow).

We have planted up nine hanging baskets around the school site. The baskets were donated by one of our volunteer families.

After applying for and being awarded a grant from the RHS (the Royal Horticultural Society), Mrs Devonshire approached local businesses to see if they could help Stonehill to make the grant money go further, by offering a discount or by donating some plants. Mr Giles Groom, from Vanstone Park Garden Centre in Codicote, was delighted to help, as the garden centre has also reached its 50 year milestone, this year. Mr Groom is keen to encourage children to take an interest in nature and sustainability and the idea of a joint venture seemed like the perfect opportunity.

Vanstone Park is a fabulous garden centre with knowledgeable staff, a great shop, a lovely restaurant, a lake full of ducks and geese and even a small steam train which gives rides around the extensive Vanstone Park site! It is well worth a visit.



*Mrs Catherine Devonshire  
Year 4 Class Teacher and Gardening Club Lead*

## Please name your child's property!

When parents come to us to ask about their child's missing coat, or sweatshirt, or lunchbox or water bottle, or other lost property, the first question we are going to ask you is, "Is it named?"! If your answer is "Yes", there is a much better chance that it can be found and reunited with its owner.

The photos below show the 60-plus UNNAMED jumpers and sweatshirts we have in lost property in the main school building at the moment. Shockingly, that is the equivalent of one item of lost property for every three children in Years 1 to 6!

Please help us to help you by ensuring that all property is named so items the children mislay can be returned when found. With the best will in the world, if an item is not named, we don't know who to return it to!



We hope you have an enjoyable half-term. Don't forget we have an INSET day on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June, so we look forward to seeing the children again on **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June at 8.45 am.**