

Friday 9th January 2026

2025/26 No: 15



01904 768325 (option 3)



[www.ralphbutterfieldprimary.co.uk](http://www.ralphbutterfieldprimary.co.uk)

## Acting Headteacher's Message



I hope the first week of the New Year has been a positive one for you. It has been a pleasure to welcome the children back into school and the atmosphere has been full of enthusiasm and creativity. Learning across the school has begun positively, with the children engaging well in their lessons. We also recognise that returning after a holiday can be challenging for some children and we are incredibly proud of those who, with support, have shown resilience and confidence as they settled back in.

### Enhancing Our Outdoor Provision – Update

In October, I shared with you our plans to enhance our outdoor play provision as part of our School Development Plan (SDP). Research consistently shows that high-quality outdoor play is essential for children's development, supporting physical health, emotional wellbeing, creativity, social skills and independence. Outdoor play provides valuable opportunities for children to explore, collaborate, problem-solve and build resilience in meaningful and enjoyable ways.

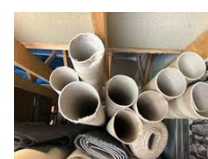
I am pleased to let you know that the new outdoor shed, very kindly funded by the PTA, and wellington boot racks are now due to be delivered by the end of this month. These additions will support the safe storage of additional resources and enable children to make better use of both the playground and the school field throughout the year. Further information about the use of the field, when wet and muddy etc, will follow.

To support these next steps, I will be talking to the children in assemblies about the introduction of some new play equipment that will be used at lunchtimes. A rota system will be introduced, focusing on toys and equipment being used on a cycle, so that children can enjoy a wide range of resources over time. Also, an important part of this process will be giving the children a voice. The children will work together to agree the rules for the safe and responsible use of each piece of equipment, helping to promote cooperation, respect and shared responsibility during playtimes.

To support this work, I would like to politely ask for donations of any good-quality, used items that families and friends may no longer need:

Donations of the following would be extremely helpful:

- Larger sized dressing up items
- Bats/racquets of all types
- Dinosaurs
- Small world items
- Action figures
- Toy cars
- Large guttering pipes/tubes
- Scooters
- Books, pens, pencils
- Toy prams/pushchairs
- Child-sized pushchairs



These resources will play an important role in enriching outdoor play and will significantly enhance the experience for all children regardless of their age. We are really excited about this project and hope that you will support us in our efforts to improve playtime for all children.

I will continue to keep you updated as we move into the next stage of this project and as the new resources and equipment are introduced.

I hope you can enjoy a pleasant, and hopefully warmer, weekend.

Best wishes

Helen Stephenson

## School Shoes

We would like to remind parent/carers that children should attend school wearing appropriate dark coloured school shoes rather than trainers. Whilst we recognise that some school shoes may have a trainer-like appearance, we have noticed an increasing number of children wearing actual trainers to school. We understand that there may be occasions when shoes are left at another house or that children may have grown out of their shoes and are waiting for a new pair; in these situations, please do let the school know. Wearing correct school footwear helps to prepare children for school expectations, particularly for those who will be heading to secondary school, where trainers are not permitted as part of the school uniform.

Thank you for your continued support.

This Week's Attendance



Thank you for supporting your child to attend school as much as possible.

Going to school **every day** makes it easier for your child to keep up in lessons.

For more information on school absence in York visit:  
[www.york.gov.uk/SchoolAttendance](http://www.york.gov.uk/SchoolAttendance)





## Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Welcome back! It was so lovely to see everyone after their Christmas break. All of the children came back to school with a renewed enthusiasm to learn and with exciting holiday news to share.

Our new theme for this half-term is 'Amazing Animals'. We shall be taking a journey around the world to explore different habitats and meeting the animals who live there. More information about this half-term can be found on our school website in the Reception classes' page.



In **phonics** this week, the children were excited to begin to learn a new set of



phonemes. The new phonemes are digraphs (two letters which make one sound) and trigraphs (three letters which make one sound) and those learnt this week are **ai**, **ee**, **igh** and **oa**. We have also learnt the catchphrases for each grapheme. These help us to remember the phoneme (sound) that each grapheme (the way the phoneme is written) makes. For example, the catchphrase for **ai** is '**tail in the rain**'. We have also continued to consolidate the phonemes and tricky words already learnt in the autumn term.

In **maths** this week, the children have investigated some new numbers in detail. These are the numbers **6**, **7** and **8**. They have investigated how these numbers can be represented and used their previous knowledge of subitising to 5 to support counting to these higher numbers. We have also practised counting on from 5, up to these numbers, when using a tens frame.



This week, our topic has focussed on the season 'winter'. The children have enjoyed finding out about how nature and the weather change at this time of year through reading fact books and themed stories. They have used their design and creative skills to make a playdough snowman and practised cutting skills to make a pair of mittens.

The children have also investigated winter and summer clothes and compared the differences.

### Reminders

- PE kits need to be in school all week please as our PE days are flexible.
- Reading books (both scheme readers and reading for pleasure books) to be returned each Monday.
- Homework folders and tricky words chains to be returned each Thursday please.
- Next Thursday, **Class 1** will be visiting Haxby library to choose new books. Please remember to put the library card in their book bag. Thank you.

If you would like to discuss anything, please don't hesitate to contact your child's class teacher via the school office or speak to us on the playground.

Thank you for your continued support.

**Mrs Robinson, Mrs Daniel, Mrs Greenwood and the  
Reception team**





## Key Stage 1 (Years 1 & 2)

Happy New Year everyone! It was wonderful to see everyone back in school after the break, ready and raring to go for a new term.

We got off to a flying start this week as we launched our new topic, "When I was Your Age". This topic will have a strong history focus as we learn about life in the Victorian times and compare aspects to our own, including toys, school and transport. We started by learning a little bit about the Victorians and that they lived when Queen Victoria was on the throne almost 200 years ago. This was a period of great change and we looked briefly at some of the inventions and social changes of the time that shape our world today, such as the telephone and the provision of free education for all children. We were fascinated by the ways that life was different for Victorian children and that the experience differed so greatly for rich or poor people.



Thinking about Victorian children in particular, we made a jack-in-the-box toy and a thaumatrope (a spinning toy that blends two separate pictures into one like a basic form of animation). To make a jack-in-the-box, we assembled a card net of a cube by cutting, folding and gluing carefully. We then made a paper spring by concertina folding two paper strips together, glued it into the box and stuck a clown face on top. To make the thaumatrope, we made two separate pictures on circles of card and stuck them to opposite sides of a stick. When we twist the stick in our hands, the



two pictures span to become one! We loved making these old-style toys and it ignited our interest for our new topic.



This week, we have been thinking about the British value of mutual respect and what it means to value and respect other people, regardless of differences. We read the story of "The Ugly Duckling," in which the duckling is made to feel rejected because he looks and feels different to the other ducklings. We thought about the effect that this would have on someone and how it must feel if someone were to make us feel bad because of something that we can't change, such as the way we look. In the story,

of course, the ugly duckling discovers that the reason he is different is because he is a swan, showing that differences make us all unique and special. We used the story to inspire our English work and also made tissue paper collages of ducklings and swans to celebrate the wonderful ways in which we are all special.

What a fantastic start to the new year everyone. We were all so impressed and thrilled by your effort and attitude.

**Mrs Atkinson, Miss Griffiths, Miss Tattersley & Mr Merrill**





## Lower Key Stage 2 (Years 3 & 4)

What a fantastic start to the new term! Year 3 and 4 have returned to school full of enthusiasm and eager to discover what the term ahead has in store.



This week, the children explored the meaning of this term's big question, 'What does it mean to me?', which is linked to the Fundamental British Value of *Mutual Respect*. Through a short video clip about teamwork and sport, the children learned how mutual respect can be shown in everyday life. They confidently defined the terms *mutual* (a feeling or action shared between people) and *respect* (treating others politely and thoughtfully and showing that we value them). The children shared some brilliant ideas and worked together to create a colourful class word cloud showing all the different ways we can show mutual respect.

The RSPB Big Schools' Birdwatch also took flight this week and the Year 3 and 4 children absolutely loved becoming bird detectives! They explored fact cards and pictures of birds commonly found in our local area, including robins, blackbirds, starlings and blue tits, learning all about their size, weight and favourite foods. The children then headed outside with their recording sheets and were thrilled to spot and record the birds they could find around the school grounds.



If you would like to join in at home, [The Big Garden Birdwatch](#) takes place between 23rd and 25th January.



We have continued our 'Rivers Deep, Mountains High' topic this week by recapping how to use the contents page and index in an atlas to locate where mountain ranges such as the Pennines, Dartmoor and Snowdonia are found in the UK. The children also learned how higher ground is represented on maps using different shades of brown, with darker shades showing areas of higher elevation. Afterwards, the children applied this knowledge by shading in six different mountain ranges on a map of the UK.

We are absolutely thrilled to share the exciting news that our Spring Term performance will be **FOREVER TREASURE ISLAND**! Planning and preparation are already in full swing and the children were bursting with excitement when they found out that auditions for the different roles will be taking place next week. We have already started listening to the songs and can't wait to begin rehearsals. We will keep you updated on how the performance is progressing and you will receive further information throughout the term about costumes and the evening performance dates and times.



As always, please do come and speak with us if you have any queries, questions or would like to share any news with us.

We hope that you have an enjoyable and relaxing weekend.

Mr Daniel, Mr Carpenter, Miss Clapham and Miss Hodgson



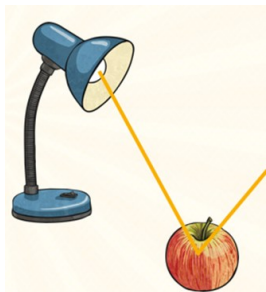
## Upper Key Stage 2 (Years 5 & 6)



This week in RE, we began learning about the 5 Pillars of Islam, which form the foundation of Muslim life. We started by reflecting on our own lives and the personal journeys we are each on. We considered the challenges and milestones we may encounter and thought about the people who support us through good times and difficult moments. We then learned that Muslims believe the Pillars of Islam provide guidance and support throughout life's journey. During this unit, pupils will focus on three of the pillars: Shahada (faith), Salah (prayer) and Zakat (charity). Lessons will explore not only the

meanings behind these practices but also how they influence the daily lives of Muslims around the world.

In PSHE, we have been learning about what it means to be a global citizen and how our actions can affect people all around the world. We explored the importance of sustainability and why it is essential to look after our planet for both present and future generations. We also learned how to identify whether choices we make have a positive or negative impact on people across the world. Using this knowledge, we wrote a manifesto explaining how we can help to make the world a better place. Finally, we reflected on everything we have learned and considered how it will influence our choices and actions in our own lives.



This week in science, we discussed how light travels and how it interacts with different objects. We learned that light travels in straight lines, which helps to explain how we are able to see things around us. We also explored the difference between objects that emit light, such as the Sun or a torch, and objects that reflect light. This helped us understand that most of the things we see do not produce their own light but are visible because light reflects off them and into our eyes. To support our learning, we used scientific diagrams to model how light is reflected by objects. By carefully drawing and labelling these diagrams, we were able to show the path that

light takes from a source to an object and then to the eye.

Please contact us or speak to us directly if you have any questions or concerns.

**Mrs Aspery, Mr Bennett and Mr Tod**





## Could you be a Parent Advocate?

Help Us To Support Parents When They Need It Most

Could you empower other parents to speak up and be heard when they are at their most vulnerable?

Do you have personal experience of Children's Social Care Services, either as a parent or a supportive family member?

Could you draw on your own experience to help others to navigate the Child Protection Process?

The City of York Council Volunteer Service is launching a new volunteer role for individuals with personal experience of Children's Social Care Services. Parent Advocates will provide practical and emotional support to parents navigating the child protection process to help them feel empowered and heard.

We need volunteers who can bring first-hand experience as someone who has engaged with Children's Services. They will need to be non-judgemental and empathetic with strong listening and communication skills.

Full training will be provided alongside regular support and supervision from an assigned Volunteer Officer. All costs will be reimbursed and volunteers will be part of a supportive community of fellow Parent Advocates. Volunteering will be flexible to ensure it fits around parents' busy lives. We will ask for an initial commitment of approx. 3-6 hours per month.

Get in touch with the Volunteer Team today by emailing [volunteering@york.gov.uk](mailto:volunteering@york.gov.uk) or call us on 07542 510430



## Autism Support for Parents from the Specialist Teaching Team for Autism

**Wednesdays Spring 2026**



### Weekly Parent/Carer Afternoon Drop-in Sessions at SEND Central

In-person drop-in support, **Wednesday afternoons, 1.30-2.30 p.m. at the YIKS All About Autism Hub, Clifton SEND Hub, (In front of Clifton Green School), YO30 6BF.** No need to book, just come along and meet a Specialist teacher and a Specialist TA from the Autism Team and other parents to discuss general issues and concerns, find information and look at some useful resources.

Wednesday **7th January** 1.30 - 2.30 p.m.

Wednesday **14th January** 1.30 - 2.30 p.m.

Wednesday **21st January** 1.30 - 2.30 p.m.

Wednesday **28th January** 1.30 - 2.30 p.m.

Wednesday **4th February** 1.30 - 2.30 p.m.

Wednesday **25th February** 1.30 - 2.30 p.m.

Wednesday **4th March** 1.30 - 2.30 p.m.

Wednesday **11th March** 1.30 - 2.30 p.m.

Wednesday **18th March** 1.30 - 2.30 p.m.

### Fortnightly Morning Phone line Sessions

To book a 20 minute phone line call within the sessions below, please email [parentcarerautismsupport@york.gov.uk](mailto:parentcarerautismsupport@york.gov.uk) with your name and a contact telephone number for us to call you on. We will send you a time slot for your 20 minute call. If we receive a high volume of requests we may need to allocate spaces on the session on a first come, first served basis.

Wednesday **14th January** 9 a.m. -12 noon

Wednesday **28th January** 9 a.m. -12 noon

Wednesday **11th February** 9 a.m. -12 noon

Wednesday **25th February** 9 a.m. -12 noon

Wednesday **11th March** 9 a.m. -12 noon

Wednesday **25th March** 9 a.m. -12 noon

This is an admin email address and we are unable to forward or respond to queries via this email. Bookings close the Thursday before the session.





# Well done!

You completed the 2025 Reindeer Rush

## Reindeer Rush



Ralph Butterfield School

You raised an amazing

# £742.57



## Thank you!

