Headstart School

Positive learning for life

News round up

Newsletter

February 2026

Headteacher's Message

As we draw this term to a close, I am incredibly proud of the vibrant learning, personal growth, and community spirit reflected throughout this newsletter. The work showcased—from sensory exploration and maths mastery to outdoor learning, BTEC projects, creative arts, sports, and life-skills development—captures the very essence of what makes Headstart such a unique and nurturing environment. Our students' achievements this term are a clear expression of our core values: inclusivity, resilience, and curiosity.

Inclusivity is at the heart of Headstart. We are committed to creating a community where every pupil is treated fairly and equally and supported to develop the social skills they need to integrate confidently into society. This term's newsletter is full of moments that celebrate this value: collaborative PE sessions, group forest-school activities, shared cooking experiences, and the warm connections pupils build through project work and animal care. Every student, regardless of need or background, has had opportunities to contribute, participate, and shine. Our inclusive learning environments, from sensory rooms to vocational spaces, ensure that every learner is seen, supported, and valued.

Across the curriculum, pupils have shown tremendous determination. Resilience is a value we intentionally promote, encouraging students to work through difficult situations and experience success through perseverance. Whether mastering new written methods in maths, tackling challenging science investigations, refining musical compositions, learning new sports techniques, or braving wet weather on the farm, our pupils continue to push themselves. Their willingness to step outside their comfort zones, try again after setbacks, and take pride in their progress is evident throughout this term's achievements. These are the skills that build confidence for life.

Curiosity fuels every corner of learning at Headstart. We actively nurture the desire to explore new ideas, new ways of thinking, and the challenges that lie ahead. This term has been rich with discovery: students experimenting with friction in science, exploring global cuisines in food education, composing 8-bit music, engaging in horticulture and animal care, investigating homeostasis, and embracing outdoor adventures. Each activity encourages pupils to ask questions, explore the world around them, and follow their interests with enthusiasm and wonder.

This newsletter reflects a school community that is thriving academically, socially, and emotionally. I want to thank our dedicated staff for their tireless work in creating enriching, meaningful learning experiences; our families for their ongoing trust and support; and, of course, our pupils, whose inclusivity, resilience, and curiosity shine through everything they do.

Warm regards,

Scott Fasciolo-Barnes

Executive Headteacher of Headstart School

News from the farm

Spring update!

It's been a busy and exciting term on the Headstart School Farm, with several new developments giving pupils fantastic hands-on learning experiences.

Sheep Put to the Ram

Our ewes have been put to the ram as we enter the sheep breeding season. Pupils have been helping with daily checks and care, and we're hopeful for lambs arriving in the spring—always a highlight for the school!

Outdoor Classroom Under Construction

Work continues our new outdoor classroom building, which will become the base for our Outdoor Learning for Life class at Crouch. Solar panels are currently being installed, helping us move toward a more sustainable farm and providing pupils with a real example of renewable energy in action.

Barn Development Led by Students

Students have also been busy redesigning part of the farm barn at Oakfield to create a new learning area. The space will feature built-in benches and tables, giving pupils a practical, comfortable place to work on farm-based learning and activities.

Cockerels, Hens & Incubating Eggs

Our hens have recently been joined by cockerels, giving pupils the chance to observe natural flock behaviour. We've also begun incubating eggs in school, with students monitoring temperature, humidity and turning. We're hoping for more chicks later this term!

Aimee and Heather's Class

This term, we have been learning about ice, materials, animals and their habitats as well as whole and halves. The students have enjoyed both onsite and offsite trips focussing on these as well as useful life skill experiences such as shopping from a list and visiting and using a local library.

Our regular visits to Barby Keels Animal Sanctuary continue to be a calm and nurturing part of the week despite the bad weather! The students enjoy spending time with the animals and learning about gentle care and responsibility.

Life Skills
The students have continued working hard on developing important life skills, including:

- Practising independent life skills.
- Baking by following a visual recipe.
- Volunteering.
- Reading, writing, counting, telling the time.
- Volunteering and working with the Mayor.

Other News:
One of our students was made student of the term last term based on his work ethics and the number of points he received for this. We have also worked towards and completed some AQAs. Some students have also been working towards and completing work for their entry level and BTECs. They have shown great focus and pride in their achievements.

We have also welcomed a new student into our class, who is settling well.

Looking Ahead
Before the end of term, we still have some lovely experiences to enjoy:

- Our end-of-term trip which we are going bowling.
- Visiting a national trust site
- Trying our hand at skiing

Matt Young's Class

The boys have had the opportunity to experience OAA (Outdoor Adventure Activities) at Bushy Wood Scout Camp this term. They have taken part in climbing and air rifle shooting so far, with campfire making and cooking to look forward to later in the term.

Having won the tutor group challenge, some of the boys enjoyed the reward of a trip to indoor go-karting!

In Science, we have been exploring forces such as friction, magnetism and gravity through many hands-on investigations. The boys have practised skills such as making predictions, recording evidence and measuring fair tests.

A quick play in the snow was a must early in the term!

Matt Young's Class cont...

$a^2+b^2=c^2$

In Art, the boys have been using a variety of different paint types (acrylic, watercolour and oil) to work on their technique. They've really impressed Aimee, making some amazing pieces of work this term!

In Maths, the boys have worked through a tricky topic of Decimals and focused superbly through Ratio as well. We now move onto Algebra!

In English, some amazing poetry has been written, based around our topic of Water. They have used similes, metaphors, personification and pathetic fallacy; as well as writing in different styles such as Haikus, Acrostic and free verse poetry.

Outdoor learning for life

A wet but busy term for Outdoor Learning for Life class. We have braved the elements caring for all of the animals on the farm everyday come rain or shine. On the farm we have exciting times ahead with eggs in our incubator and hopefully lambs due after the arrival of the very handsome Harry the Herdwick ram.

We presented Barby Keels Animal Sanctuary with our donation collected from our Christmas chocolate tombola, thank you to everyone for your kind donations.

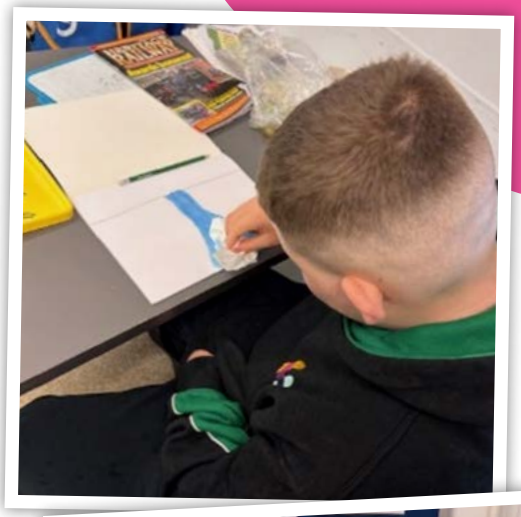
In English we have been listening to and writing poetry creating our own Haiku and acrostic poems based around ourselves and with a winter theme.

In science we have been learning about nutrition and what a healthy diet for ourselves and the animals is made up of. We found a fox skeleton on the farm and compared its teeth to those of a deer and badger.

On Friday afternoon's we now have cookery every week and have really enjoyed making and eating drop scones and animal bread rolls using our maths skills for measuring.

In construction we have completed our hedgehog houses and nest boxes.

Oli's Class

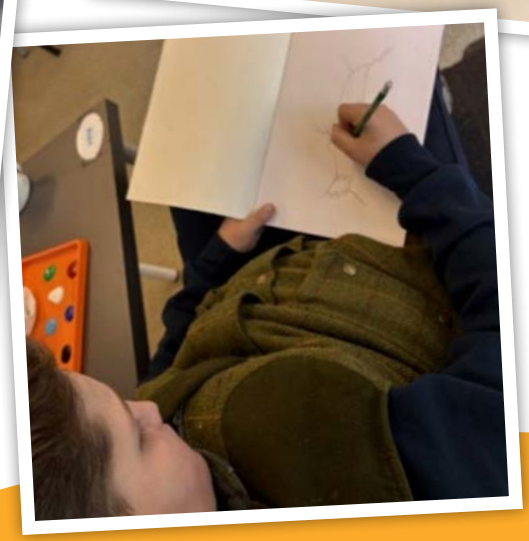


Art

This term, students in Oli's class have been learning to draw and paint rivers and waterfalls by following step-by-step guides. They explored how water moves through the landscape, focusing on the flow, direction, and shapes found in rivers and waterfalls. Students practised sketching outlines first, then added details such as rocks, splashes, and reflections. Using paint, they experimented with colour mixing and brush techniques to show movement, depth, and texture in water.

Science

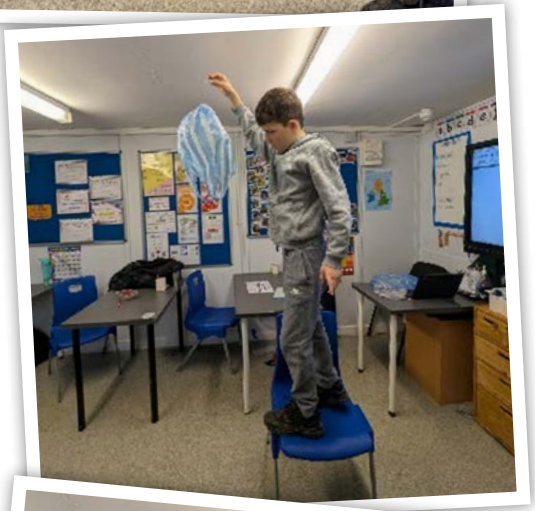
In science lessons, students in have been learning about forces and how they affect movement. They explored key ideas such as pushes, pulls, friction, and wind resistance. Through hands-on practical activities, students used a toy car and changed the material on a surface to see the amount of friction. Students also investigated how wind resistance slows objects as they move through air using different sized bags attached to a Lego man. By making predictions, carrying out experiments, and observing results,

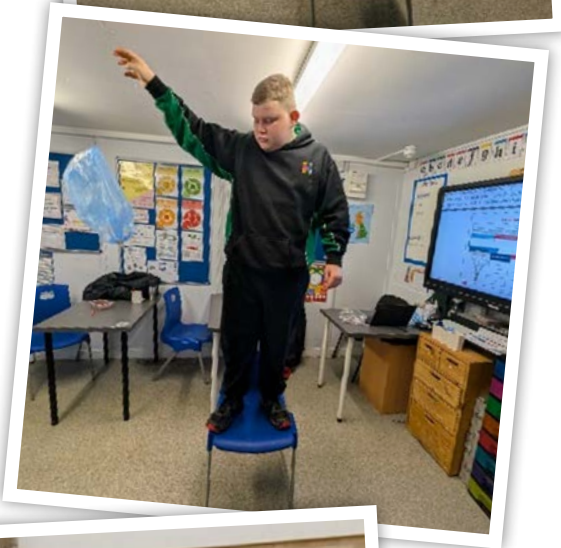


Oli's Class cont...

students developed their scientific enquiry skills and gained a clearer understanding of how forces work in everyday situations.

This term, students have been enjoying football sessions as part of their PE lessons in the sports hall. They have been developing key skills such as passing, dribbling, shooting, and teamwork through a range of fun and structured activities. Working individually and in small teams, students practised controlling the ball and applying rules in game situations. The sessions encouraged cooperation, fair play, and physical fitness, with students showing enthusiasm, effort, and enjoyment throughout.



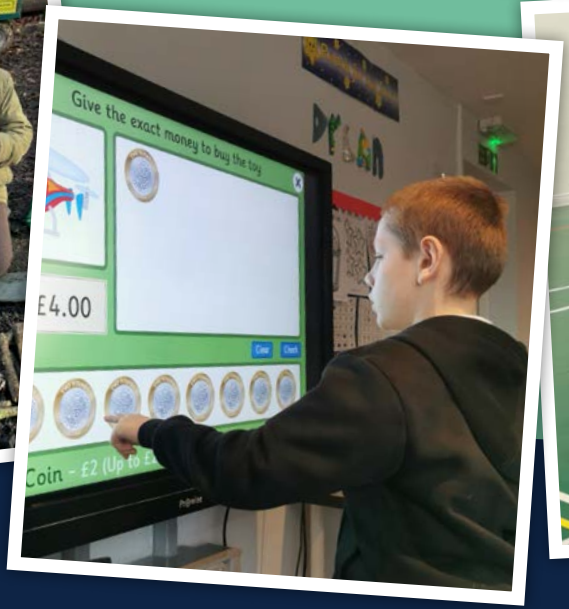


Conner's Class

This term has been a busy one in the Link One class despite the challenging weather. We have been learning about different types of writing including poems and stories in English. We have been improving our knowledge of addition and subtraction and beginning to learn about multiplication in Maths as well as learning about money. In Science, we have been learning about plants which has seen us plant our own plants to learn about what plants need to survive.

In PE we have been making use of a sports hall with a variety of sports and activities which has been a highlight of the week for the class with great interactions and working as a team. The class has had the opportunity to visit Bushy Wood to learn some forest school skills including working together to create a campfire and learning about fire safety.

We have our class reward trip coming up in the next week and the children will get the opportunity to try skiing at a local dry ski slope which we are all very excited about.



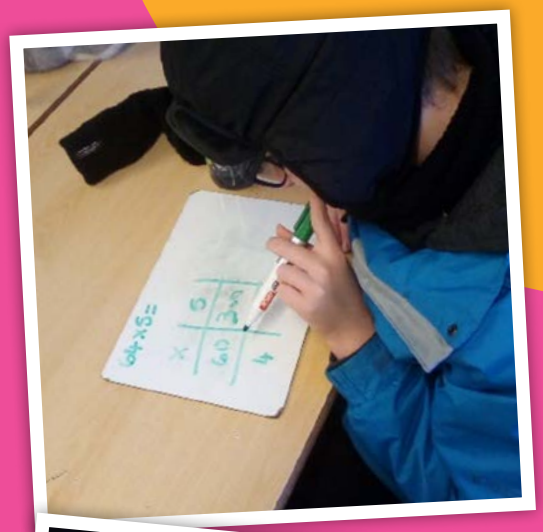
Celia's Class

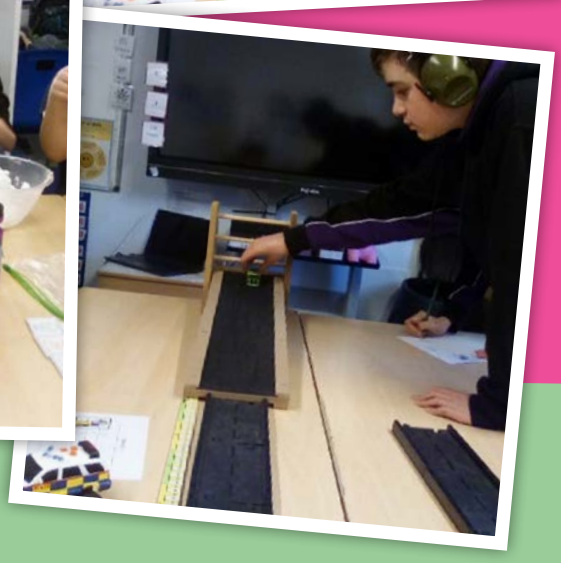
In Maths this term, we have been practising our mental maths skills and using them in the written methods. We have learnt the grid method to multiply with larger numbers and the bus stop method to divide. We have used a multiplication square and cubes to help with our learning. It is very hard learning new methods, but the class have kept positive and open-minded.

In Science, we have been exploring forces and magnets. We carried out an investigation to develop our scientific enquiry skills. We answered the following question, `How does the type of surface affect the distance an object slides?' We made a prediction, identified what needed to be kept the same and what needed changing. We carried out each test 3 times, discussing the importance of taking repeat measurements.

In English we have been reading and writing poems about water – which is very apt with the amount of rain we have been getting recently!

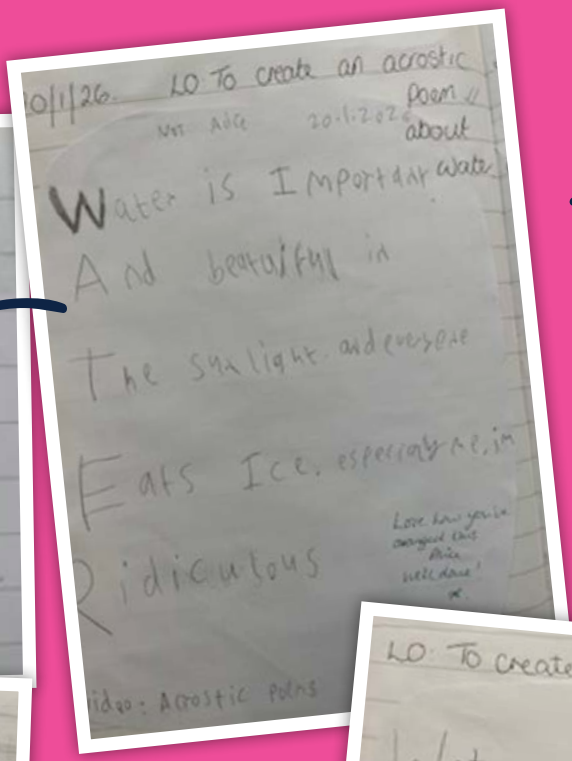
Poetry can be difficult to comprehend and write but the class have listened, responded and worked brilliantly, creating various poems of their own.

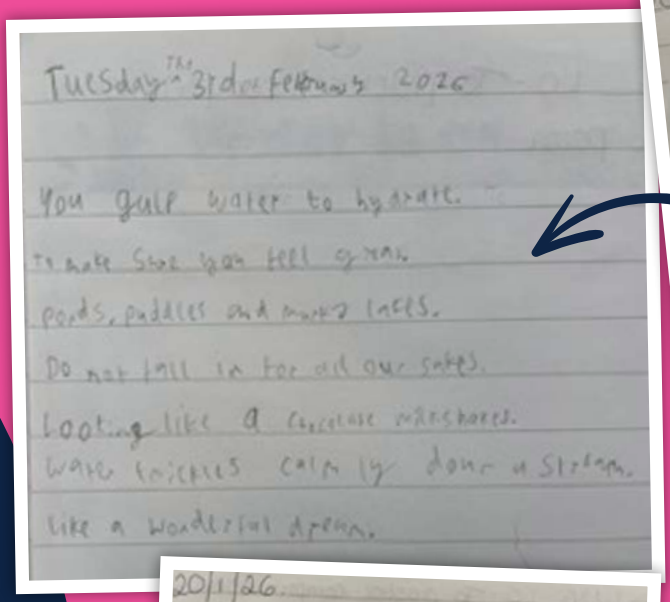




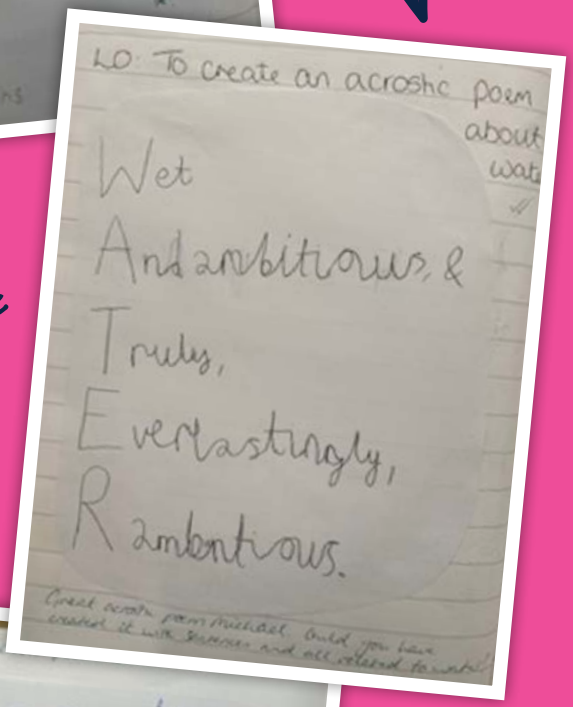
Celia's Class cont...

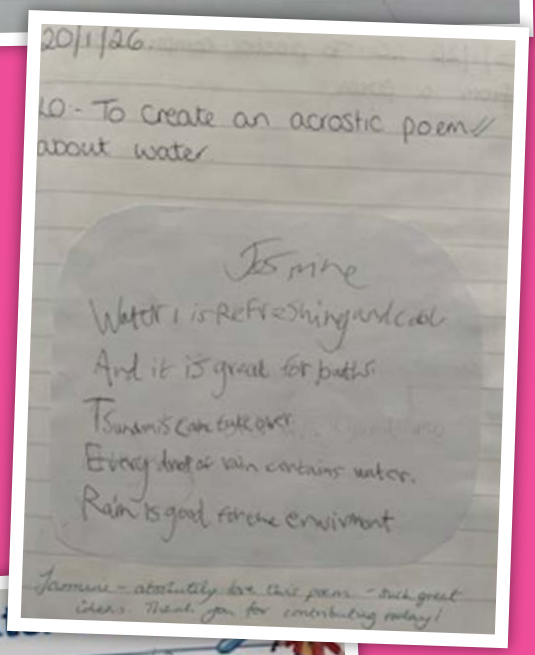
by Alice





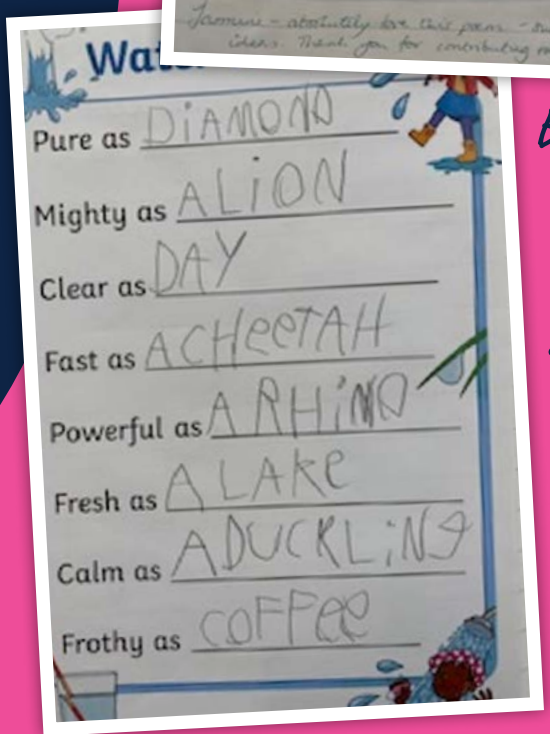
by Michael



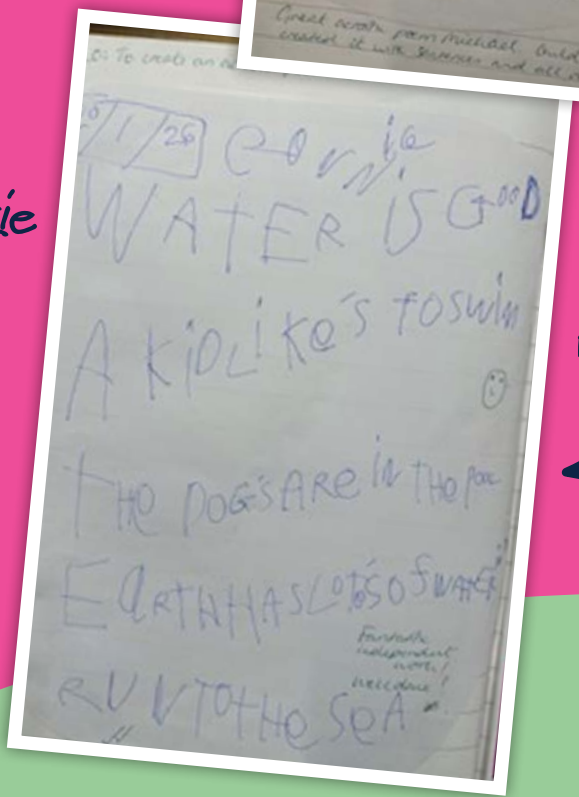


by Jasmine

by Reggie



by Ronnie



The Link Oakfield

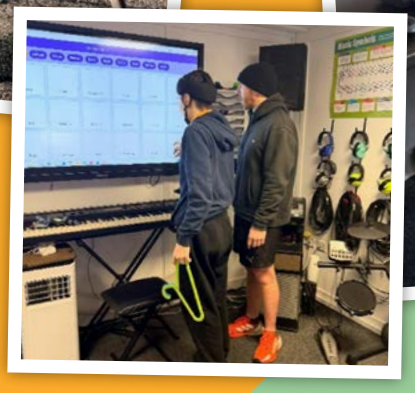
The Link have continued to visit East Hoathley, community gardens where they are able to plant and grow fruits and vegetables.

Students have continued to develop their cooking skills each week by making a variety of foods. They made pancakes to celebrate Shrove Tuesday.

For science the children have been finding out about the Arctic and Antarctic regions. Children have learned what animals live there and how they survive the extreme cold weather conditions.

Students have weekly coding and music lessons where they are taught to use a variety of equipment and have lots of fun in doing so.
We visited Hampden Park last week as part of a photography lesson and the children were able to carefully handle the camera equipment.

To develop their personal, social and emotional development we visit the local park where children can engage with the public and develop better social and turn taking skills.

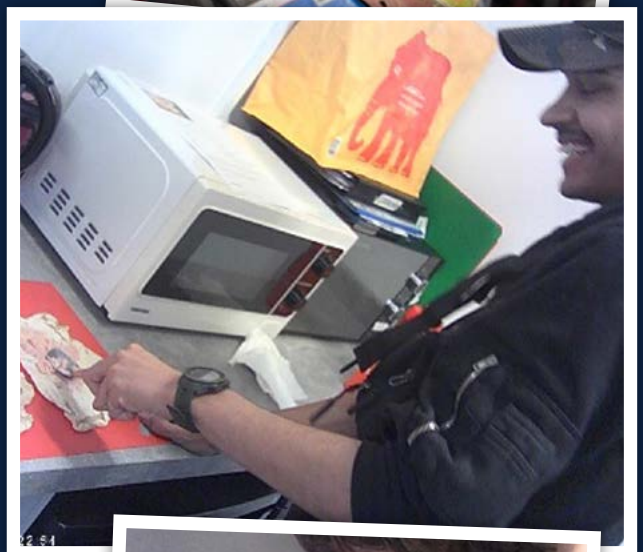


Key Stage 4 and Post 16

This term KS4 and KS5 students have enjoyed making their own flatbreads for smashed chicken wraps, delicious apple pies, pizzas and various other dishes during Life skills, focusing on making meals on a budget, shopping, knife skills, chopping, mixing, and peeling.

Students have enjoyed building a new gate for the rabbit, wiring a plug and visiting Wakehurst place.

This term in science, students have been studying homeostasis and focusing on how the body keeps its internal conditions stable, even when the outside environment changes. Students learn how factors such as body temperature, blood glucose levels, and water balance are carefully monitored and controlled through systems like the nervous system and hormones. This topic also builds strong foundations for wider learning about disease, exercise, and the effects of lifestyle choices on the body.



In Maths, students have developed essential skills across units such as Fractions, Non-calculator methods (decimals), and Straight line graphs. Students have strengthened their confidence with fractions by simplifying, comparing, and applying them to real-life problems, while non-calculator decimal work has encouraged accuracy, number sense, and clear written methods. In straight line graphs, students learn how to plot equations, understand gradients, and interpret graphs, helping them connect algebra with visual representations.

BTEC

BTEC Music
BTEC Music students have been completing coursework focused on music for film, exploring how sound supports action, mood, and storytelling. They have also begun learning about music for games, with a particular focus on creating 8-bit music inspired by retro side-scrolling games.

BTEC Coding
In BTEC Coding, students have been developing their programming skills by coding a tower defence game in Roblox. This project encourages problem-solving, logical thinking, and creativity while working within a real game-development environment.

BTEC Creative Media
BTEC Creative Media students have been finishing their storyboards, refining ideas, planning shots, and preparing for the next stages of their media projects.

Sport
In Sport, students have been enjoying a range of activities, including pickleball, badminton, and football tennis, developing coordination, teamwork, and fitness in a fun and inclusive setting.

Chef Ronnie

Food is the fuel for the brain!
Here at Headstart Crouch we truly believe in eating well… making also sure that food is never boring, exploring the World one dish at the time and transmit the enthusiasm to our students and staff alike in regards of trying new things.

Have you ever tried a Ghanian jollof? Some Spanish albondigas perhaps? Maybe a Lebanese shish taouk or an Ethiopian injera?

Here at Crouch, we love it all, of course enjoying the British favourites twice a week, roasting and stewing our meats and vegetables following traditions.

Having in the kitchen preparing our meals, an Italian chef who travelled the world, Monday is dedicated to authentic pasta dishes, followed by French, Greek, Caribbean, South American and Asian cuisines that are also on the 3 weeks rotation menu; each term has a new menu, based on seasonal offers and, of course, the weather!

We strictly follow our government regulations in order to maximise the nutritional values in our lunches; the complete absence of deep fat fryers, use of a large variety of "hidden" vegetables and a strict limitation of pastries and desserts, makes our school even more healthy than the average nationally.

We also like to prepare our marinates and dips from scratch, so to avoid readymade sauces and pastes that contains too many "unreadable" ingredients and additives.

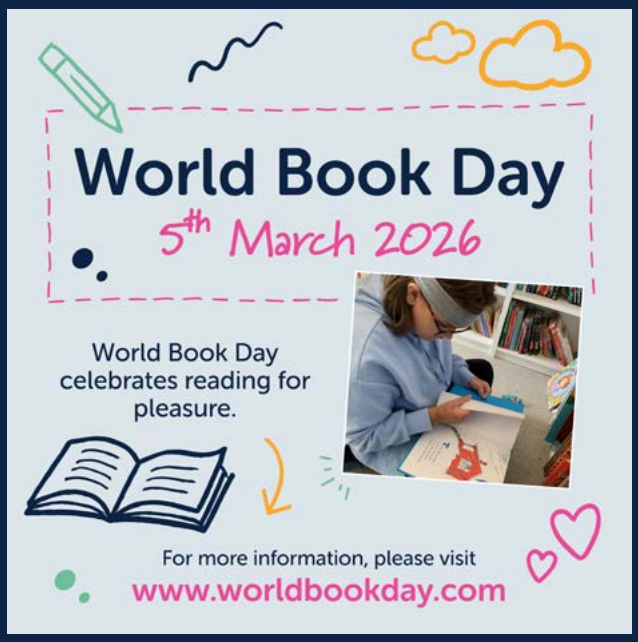
Our students experience a lunch different from the ordinary, by trying different dishes and cuisines from around the World, and we can proudly say that after some initial hesitation given by those unknown exotic names, most of their favourites are dishes never eaten before.

"During my school catering experience, I have studied the correlation between healthy eating and GCSE exams results, by using a till software where I applied highest points to healthiest items; the system then recorded those points for each student who used our catering service through the school years, and I have acknowledged that the students with highest GCSE results had also the highest points score in the software. I like to think that indeed, (good) food is the fuel for the (healthy) brain"

Wanna keep in touch, to know more about our food offers? rrusso@headstartschool.co.uk

Stay in the Know

Here are some upcoming events for you to pop in your diary...



Parent feedback

Feedback is vital to Headstart School, helping us strengthen our community and celebrate what we do well. By sharing your experiences, you help us continue providing the best possible support and education.

You can leave your feedback by scanning the QR code below:

Or click on the link **www.headstartschool.co.uk/share-your-feedback**