

Dear Families,

The pupils across the school have enjoyed a wonderful Christmas month, and I would like to thank members of POW and all staff for enabling the many events and performances that have taken place. These experiences have created lasting memories for our children and families.

I would also like to congratulate every pupil on their achievements since September. All our children have made a valuable contribution to school life and can now reflect with their families on a very successful Autumn term. I am always immensely proud of the progress our youngest learners make in such a short space of time. As learning becomes more challenging, our older pupils sometimes need extra reassurance as they begin to compare themselves with their peers. It is important to remember that every child is making excellent progress from their own starting point. The confidence shown by so many pupils during our performances demonstrates that development at our school extends well beyond the classroom.

We ended the term with a fantastic staff pantomime, followed by a professional pantomime, both of which were thoroughly enjoyed by the children.

When asked what they were most looking forward to over the holidays, many children spoke warmly about spending time with their families. They shared simple but joyful plans such as baking, crafting and visiting the park, reminding us that the most meaningful experiences do not require spending money, but time together.

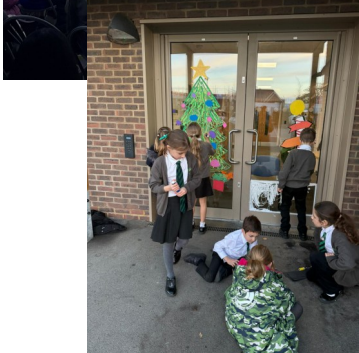
This term, we have also placed a strong focus on online safety. As we move into the Christmas period, when children may be spending more time online, I would like to remind families to ensure appropriate filters and safety settings are in place on all devices. Continued supervision and regular conversations about staying safe online are essential in helping children to enjoy the digital world responsibly.

As always, please do look at the class pages on the website for any timetable changes and information about Spring term learning themes.

With warmest wishes,

Mrs Kelly

A huge thank you to Niki Baller, who is not only a valued member of the LAB but has also generously run an art club for us. I am sure you have all admired the wonderful artwork on our doors.



Our core values are:
Family Gratitude Responsibility Diversity Excellence
In term 2 we have looked at the value of Gratitude

Early Years News

This half term has been an exciting and enriching journey for our Nursery and Reception children as we explored the fascinating world of nocturnal animals and celebrated a range of meaningful cultural events. Our learning began with discovering what it means to be nocturnal. The children enjoyed stories, songs, and activities that helped them understand how certain animals come out at night and how their special features help them survive in the dark. A highlight of the term was an unforgettable visit from Ranger Stu, who brought along some amazing animals for the children to meet up close. Their faces lit up with curiosity and wonder as they learned about each creature's unique characteristics and habitats.

Alongside our animal adventures, we embraced the festive spirit by learning about two important celebrations: Diwali and Christmas. We explored the traditions, symbols, and stories behind each festival, and the children enjoyed comparing the similarities and differences. Through crafts, dancing, and storytelling, they gained a deeper understanding of how people celebrate in different ways around the world.

Of course, no winter term would be complete without our much-anticipated Nativity performance. The children worked incredibly hard learning their lines, songs, and actions, and we were so proud of their confidence and enthusiasm on stage. It was wonderful to see them shine and share the joy of the season with their families.

It has been a term full of learning, excitement, and memorable experiences. We are incredibly proud of how engaged and enthusiastic the children have been, and we look forward to even more adventures next term!



Forest School News

Winter has arrived at Forest School but the children have been wrapped up warmly thanks to the extra layers of clothing and toasty campfires we have been having. Each year group has been learning about woodland animals, as well as those that hibernate in the countryside around us. We even observed a frog hibernating in an empty watering can!

Year 1 have enjoyed their first campfires, learning how to stay safe around the fire, the materials needed, as well as how we construct and light fires at Forest School. Lots of children have persevered and succeeded in using fire steels to create sparks, challenging themselves to '10 sparks out of 10' or making 10 consecutive sparks!

Year 2 gravitated towards large scale construction, making a fantastic aqueduct with Mrs Lund, using creativity, teamwork and problem-solving skills to channel water across our loose parts play area.

Year 3 have been busy planting Spring bulbs and filling our newly constructed raised beds with soil, transporting it by wheelbarrow across the playground in the process. We'll definitely be ready for next year's growing season! They've also been gaining independence in constructing and lighting their own campfires, with Mrs von Speyr with them for safety but with minimal input needed.



Year 1 News

As geographers, the children have been learning about the four countries that make up the United Kingdom. They can now confidently name each country and its capital city, as well as identify the national animal of each one.

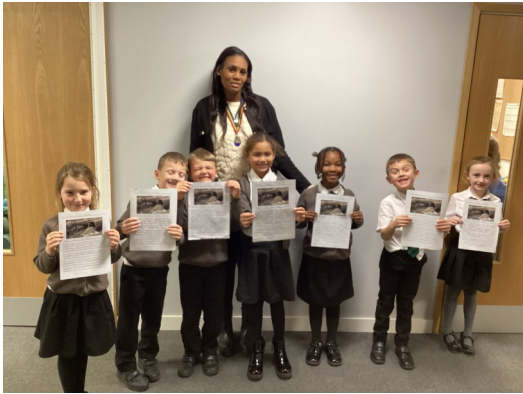
In science, the children have greatly enjoyed experimenting with a range of materials. They have twisted, bent, stretched and squashed different objects to explore their properties. This learning was then applied in Design Technology, where the children used a twisting motion to juice oranges and lemons, creating healthy and delicious smoothies.

We have also thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the Nativity alongside the Year 2 children. The pupils worked hard to learn the songs for the performance and showed wonderful enthusiasm and confidence throughout.



Year 2 News

Year 2 have enjoyed an exceptional term of learning and fun. We wrote persuasive letters to the mayor to complain about pollution in the River Mole, explored 2-D and 3-D shapes in mathematics, and visited St Bart's Church to learn about the biblical Christmas story. We also produced a truly impressive Nativity show, featuring a highly talented and confident cast. In Design and Technology, the children designed and built their own model houses using recycled cardboard, carefully ensuring that each structure was both stable and attractive. It has been a monumental term, rich in learning and memorable experiences that will stay with the children for years to come. We look forward to even more exciting learning opportunities and experiences as the academic year continues.



Year 3 News

What a fantastic term it has been in Year 3. The children have thoroughly enjoyed their sewing project, where they learned how to use running stitches and back stitches before applying these skills to create their own Christmas decorations. A huge thank you to all the volunteers who supported us with this project. Your help was greatly appreciated.

In science, we have been learning about animals, including humans. The children explored the human skeleton and investigated how muscles and bones work together to provide support, movement and protection. We also compared the human skeleton with those of other animals, identifying similarities and differences.

In English, we enjoyed reading Roald Dahl's *The BFG*, which inspired the children to write their own imaginative stories featuring friendly and not so friendly giants. The creativity and enthusiasm shown in their writing has been wonderful to see.

We have also loved learning and performing our Christmas songs for the Carol Concert. The children sang beautifully and demonstrated great confidence when performing in front of an audience.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. We wish you all a relaxing and enjoyable Christmas break.



Year 4 News

Technology has played an important role in Year 4 learning this half term. Each week, the children use computers to support their learning in a variety of ways. In ICT, they have been learning how to create simple animations and are now beginning to understand how to pre programme using an application called 2Draw. This allows them to control a turtle on screen to draw a range of patterns and shapes.

Computers are also used regularly in maths. Through Maths Whizz, the children work towards collecting three blue gems to reflect the progress expected from their home learning. In addition, the children complete a weekly sound check using TTRS to support them in developing rapid recall of multiplication facts, as they work towards the Year 4 multiplication check, which is now only six months away. Please do continue to support your child with their home learning, as it really does make a significant difference.

In English, we have been studying the books *FaRtHER* and *Until I Met Dudley*. Both texts have thoroughly engaged the children, for different reasons, and have supported the development of both fiction and non fiction writing skills.

In science, the children have been classifying living things in a variety of ways and have even learned some interesting vocabulary used when grouping invertebrates. In geography, our focus has been on rivers. The children have used atlases to identify rivers around the world and have learned about the different ways land around rivers is used.

Our wellbeing lessons have encouraged the children to explore the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and to consider how we can ensure the rights of others are protected. In RE, the children have been learning about representations of the Trinity in Christian artwork and the symbolism of water in baptism.

In Design Technology, the children have been learning about seasonal foods and what the term seasonal means. They have also learned about the life of Jamie Oliver and are very much looking forward to making a seasonal hotpot meal in their groups. It should prove to be a lovely warmer on a cold winter's day, and perhaps something they may enjoy recreating with you over the holidays.



Year 5

What a fantastic term it has been for our brilliant Year 5 classes. Wildcats and Roe Deer have shown impressive enthusiasm, creativity and resilience across all areas of their learning, and we are extremely proud of everything they have achieved.

In English, the children explored the imaginative world of *The Lost Thing* by Shaun Tan. They analysed the text before designing their own wonderfully unique lost things and writing descriptive, cohesive narratives to bring them to life. Their creativity and attention to detail were a real highlight.

In maths, the children have truly shone as fraction experts, demonstrating a secure understanding of equivalent fractions and confidently converting between improper fractions and mixed numbers. In science, they have enjoyed investigating light, learning how shadows form, experimenting with refraction and exploring how the human eye works.

In Spanish, the children developed their conversational skills by learning how to ask about pets and name common animals. Music has filled our classrooms with festive joy as the children rehearsed their Young Voices songs and prepared for our magical candlelit Christmas performance. In Design Technology, Year 5 have loved learning about Anderson shelters and building their own small scale models, showing creativity alongside excellent safety skills when using the mitre block and junior hacksaw.



SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT



Congratulations to Imogen in Year 3, who has been proudly sharing her many achievements in gymnastics and trampolining. It is wonderful to hear about the dedication and success our children show outside of school, and we love celebrating these moments with them. Every child shines in their own unique way, and we are always delighted to recognise and share what they are doing so well beyond the classroom.

Congratulations to our Accelerated Reader Millionaire readers!

These pupils have each read over a million words since starting AR — a fantastic achievement that reflects their dedication, love of reading, and growing confidence. Well done!

Emma (yr5) - 4 times millionaire
Charlie (yr5) - 3 times millionaire
Isla (yr 3) - 2 times millionaire
Jowan (yr5) - 1 time millionaire
Naomi (yr5) - 1 time millionaire

A special mention to these Year 2's who have completed over double the number of quizzes required this year already: Louis, Emily, Mia, Martin, Ashreet and Joshua.



Could You Lend a Hand? Volunteers Welcome

We are always grateful for the generous support of our school community and are currently looking for volunteers to assist with a variety of activities. Parents, carers and grandparents are all warmly invited to get involved.

There are many ways you could help, such as running or supporting a homework club, hearing pupils read, assisting with gardening or DIY projects, or joining the chicken care rota. Whether you can offer regular help or just an occasional hand, your time and skills make a real difference to our pupils and the wider school environment.

If you would like to volunteer or find out more, please contact the school office.

Thank you for helping make our school such a special place.

Telephone 01293 365019

Email: westvalepark@westvaleppa.org.uk



Spring Term - Term Dates

Monday 5th January 2026	INSET DAY
Tuesday 6th January 2026	First Day of Spring Term
Thursday 15th January 8:50am	Badgers Class Assembly – parents welcome
Friday 23rd January 5pm	POW AGM—all welcome
Thursday 29th January 8:50am	Hedgehogs Class Assembly – parents welcome
Thursday 5th February 8:50am	Wildcats Class Assembly – parents welcome
Thursday 12th February	Year 5 Trip Sha Jahan Mosque
Wednesday 25th February	Year 5 Young Voice 02 arena
Thursday 5th March	World Book Day
Thursday 12th March 8:50am	Stoats Class Assembly – parents welcome
Friday 13th March	INSET DAY
Monday 23rd March 3:40pm—5:40pm	Parent teacher consultations
Tuesday 24th March 4:30pm –7:30pm	Parent teacher consultations
Friday 27th March	Winning house non uniform day
Friday 27th March 8:45am	Easter Bonnet Parade—all parents welcome

PAPAYA LET'S TALK ABOUT OUR KIDS AND THEIR TECH

1 in 5 children are bullied online

*Online bullying in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics (ons.gov.uk), 2023.

Of those bullied:

75%

were adversely affected

24%

Self harm as a result

PAPAYA LET'S TALK ABOUT OUR KIDS AND THEIR TECH

Gaming

01 Reward
02 Purpose
03 Social connection

↑100%

Gaming can result in 100% increase in dopamine. Over time, you can develop dopamine depletion making it harder to enjoy real life.

PAPAYA LET'S TALK ABOUT OUR KIDS AND THEIR TECH

If your child has a phone

01. Talk to your child and other parents
02. Keep devices out of bedrooms at night
03. Use filters and parental control apps
04. Encourage more things that help your child/teen forget about their phone

We were pleased to host a range of workshops for our Year 4 and Year 5 pupils, alongside a valuable parent talk delivered by PAPAAYA. These sessions provided important opportunities for learning and discussion, and we are grateful to PAPAAYA for supporting our school community with their expertise.



RECENT POW FUNDRAISING

Halloween disco	£716
POW stall at pumpkin picking	£73
Christmas cards	£507
Festive afternoon (incl Grotto)	£881
Hamper	£877
Christmas Disco	£481
Elfridges	£827
Uniform sales	£68
Your School Lottery	£284
<u>Total raised this term</u>	<u>£4712</u>

What a term! Recent items we have funded thanks to your support include books, iPads, aprons and most recently a drum kit! Thank you!

Contact Us: info@parentsofwestvaleparkacademy.org



SAVE THE DATE: AGM ON FRIDAY 23RD JANUARY

Come along to our AGM on Friday 23rd January at 5pm. This is a chance to hear about the work of POW, and discuss priorities for the coming year, including ideas for what POW funds should be spent on.

If you are interested in putting yourself forward for a role on the committee - particularly the vacant roles of Vice Chair and Secretary, please email us to find out more.

YOU CAN STILL SUPPORT US OVER THE BREAK!



Doing your weekly food shop online or ordering a take out? Taking out insurance or booking flights? If you haven't already signed up to a cash back site then shop for your usual purchases via <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/parentsofwestvalepark>. Over 8,000 retailers will donate to us when you use easyfundraising at no extra cost to yourself!



Start playing Your School Lottery to help raise funds for our school. Tickets for the lottery cost just £1 per week and there is a guaranteed winner for each school every Saturday which is drawn on a raffle basis.

There is also a national jackpot drawn weekly with a top prize of £25,000! Sign up and buy your tickets here -

<https://www.yourschoollottery.co.uk/lottery/school/westvale-park-primary-academy-and-nursery>



We have our very own clothes recycling bin located on the school premises. Place tied big bags of pre-loved wearable clothing, good quality paired shoes and household textiles outside reception (under cover) and they will be placed in the clothing bin ready for collection.

Contact Us: info@parentsofwestvaleparkacademy.org