AYCLIFFE DRIVE NEWS #24

Head Teacher Newsletter #24

12th November 2026

Aycliffe Drive Primary School

Message from the Headteacher



Dear Parents/Carers,

Parent Governor

We are pleased to welcome Mustafa Alhatem as our new parent governor. Parent governors bring an important family perspective to the governing body and help us keep the needs and experiences of all pupils at the heart of our decisions. We look forward to working with Mr Alhatem as we continue to make Aycliffe Drive a caring, ambitious and successful school for every child.

Attendance

We are pleased to share that the County Attendance Team has informed us that Aycliffe Drive is no longer rated red for high levels of absence. We have moved to amber, reflecting the great improvement our pupils, families and staff continue to make together. Thank you

for your support in helping children attend school regularly. We still have work to do, but by keeping up this shared effort, we can aim for green!

Armistice Day

Pupils commemorated Armistice Day by hanging their poppy discs in the KS2 playground and taking part in a two-minute silence. Parents are welcome to come and see the poppies before and after school on Thursday and Friday. We remembered all those who have fallen in the past, as well as those who continue to work and fight for peace around the world.

Parent Consultation

Thank to all parents who have attended a parent consultation with class teachers. We truly appreciate your commitment to your child's education and your continued support of our school community. Parent meetings are an important way for teachers to share your child's progress, achievements, and targets. If you have any further questions or would like to follow up on anything discussed, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Donations

Thank you to all the families who have made a donation to help fund school events and trips. Your generosity reflects the courtesy and empathy at the heart of our school and community, and we are incredibly grateful that you have thought of others in this way. A special thank you to those that paid a substantial amount for their particularly generous donations, which will make a real difference to the opportunities we can provide for our pupils.

Kind regards,

Mrs Atkinson





Message from the Governors



Anti-Bullying Week | 16–20 November 2026

This year's theme is 'Break the Silence', encouraging children to speak up and adults to listen and help. This links with a NSPCC assembly we did last year named 'Speak Out; Stay Safe.'

Children may find it difficult to talk about bullying because they are worried about making things worse, not being believed or getting into trouble. Please remind your child that they can always talk to you or another trusted adult and will never be in trouble for asking for help.

What is bullying?

Bullying is deliberate, hurtful behaviour that happens repeatedly and involves an imbalance of power. It can include name-calling, threats, physical aggression, deliberately excluding others, spreading rumours or sending hurtful online messages. Although not every disagreement or unkind comment is bullying, all hurtful behaviour is taken seriously at Aycliffe Drive.

How can you help?

Make time to talk to your child and listen without judgement. Ask if anything has made them feel upset or worried, and reassure them that they have done the right thing by speaking up. If your child shares a concern, listen calmly, make a note of what has happened and contact their class teacher so that we can work together to resolve it.

Remember, your child does not need to be certain that something is bullying before asking for help. Any behaviour that makes them feel unsafe or upset should be shared with an adult.

At Aycliffe Drive, the safety and wellbeing of every child is our priority. We take all concerns seriously and want every child to know there is a trusted adult they can turn to for support.

During November, children will take part in activities linked to Anti-Bullying Week.

Together, let's remind every child of our school value: Young Voices and that their comments matter to feel safe. We will always listen and help.

School Information

Change to Christmas Lunch Menu - Wednesday 9th Decemeber

The kitchen has let us know that chicken will be served instead of turkey for Christmas lunch on Wednesday 9 December. This menu change has reset the bookings in SchoolGrid. Please log in to School Grid and rebook your child's Christmas lunch, even if you had already placed an order. If you have any problems rebooking, please contact the school office and we'll be happy to help. If your child does not wish to have a school lunch, please send them with a packed lunch from home, as there will be no other school lunch options available on the day.

Donations - Arbor - Trips not Club section!

As we have been asked a few times if we have a donation box at the school, we have set up a Donations (trip section) on Arbor for any parents who would like to make a voluntary donation to the school. These donations will help us provide additional resources, enhance learning opportunities and support activities and experiences that benefit our children and the wider school community.

Please be assured that making a donation is entirely optional. There is absolutely no obligation or expectation for anyone to contribute, and we completely understand that not everyone may be in a position to do so. Any donation, no matter how big or small, would be greatly appreciated and will make a positive difference to our school. Thank you for your continued support and generosity!

Christmas Baubles - Deadline Wednesday 18th November

The children are invited to take part in making their own Christmas Baubles, which will contain a ribbon that is the length of their current height, as a gift for a parent, grandparent, other family member or friend. To cover the cost of the bauble, box, ribbons and decorative items, the cost will be £3.50 per bauble. If you would like your child to make a Christmas Bauble, please pay the £3.50 via the Arbor App by Wednesday 18th November (under the club section). We will only order the number of supplies that are requested, and no late orders will be accepted.

Christmas Discos - Tuesday 15th December

On Tuesday 15th December we will holding Christmas Discos for the children. This year, parents will need to pay in advance via the Arbor app (please note that we are unable to accept cash payments). Bookings will open from Wednesday 4th November and close on Tuesday 15th December, allowing parents as much time as possible to book their child on. If children arrive without payment being made, parents will be contacted to either arrange collection or payment on collection at end of disco. Please be aware that no pupils (even if in year 6) will be allowed to walk home after the discos.

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 disco - £3.50 from 3.30pm-4.45pm

Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 disco - £3.50 from 5.00pm-6.30pm

Nursery children will have their own disco (during session time) during the last week.

Application for leave of absence forms - Online only

All application for leave forms must be submitted online. Forms can be typed straight onto by parents and returned to admin@aycliffedrive.herts.sch.uk. We will be unable to accept any paper forms. Please find the application for leave form on our website - Aycliffe Drive Primary School - Attendance

Amazon Wishlist

Please take a look at the books we currently desperately need on our Amazon Wishlist. Any donations of these would be greatly appreciated, new or if you already have these at home in good condition that you no longer need. https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/29SVDG2EPKGBK?ref_=abls_nvfly_ylThank you for your support in this!

Key Dates



Key Dates - Please keep an eye as these dates as they are updated throughout the term. Further information for events will be shared closer to the time.

13/11 - World Kindness Day - children to wear clothes that make them feel happy! £1 donation on Arbor for Children in Need

13/11 - Deadline to return Christmas Card Designs/orders

16/11 - Anti-bullying week

16/11 - Wear odd sock for Anti-bullying week

18/11 - Deadline to order Christmas Baubles via Arbor (club section)

23/11 - Reception tour for children starting Sep 2027 at 1.30pm

26/11 - Flu Mop-up session

27/11 - Occasional Day - pupils not in school

08/12 - Nursery performance to parents at 9.00am

09/12 - Christmas Lunch and Jumper Day

10/12 - Reception play to parents at 9.00am

11/12 - KS1 pantomime trip

14/12 - KS1 Performance Year 1 parents at 9.00am

15/12 - KS1 Performance Year 2 parents at 9.00am

15/12 - Christmas Discos - please pay via Arbor

16/12 - iRock concert to parents at 10.45am

17/12 - Ancient Egypt Workshop for year 5 and 6

18/12 - School closes at 1.30pm

04/01 - INSET day - pupils not in school

05/01 - Pupils return to school

20/01 - Reception trip to Tring Museum

02/02 - LKS2 Trip to The Safety Centre

05/02 - Dress to Express Day

08+09/02 - Skipping workshops

11/02 - Year 6 Health and Wellbeing Questionnaire with nurses

15-19/02 - Half term

Forest School Dates

Nursery (all children) - 13/11

Reception Group 1 - 19/11 AM

Nursery (all children) - 20/11

Birch - 23/11 PM

Reception Group 2 - 26/11 AM

Sycamore - 30/11 PM

Reception Group 3 - 03/12 AM

Nursery (all children) - 04/12

Chestnut - 07/12 - PM

Nursery (all children) - 11/12

Star Awards and Kindness Catchers

2026-2027

Kindness Catcher Awards

Ash: Vladimir

Elm: Liyam, Betty-Belle, Denisa, Sofia

Birch: Reggie

Sycamore: Ronny, Forest

Chestnut: Iyobosa

Laurel: Halle, Jacob

Willow: Charlie

Hawthorn:

Star Awards

Nursery: Ema

Ash: Irina

Elm: Cleopatra

Birch: Olive

Sycamore: Ronny

Chestnut: Andrew

Laurel: Ayaan, Benjamin

Willow: Adil, Santiago

Hawthorn: Nolan, Jaxon G

Maple: William, Thea

Oak: Joan, Rahela

Redwood: Layla, Harrison

Achievements outside of school

If your child has accomplished an achievement outside of school, for example, passed a dance exam, moved up a stage in swimming etc, and would like it mentioned on the newsletter, please email all the details to admin@aycliffedrive.herts.sch.uk

Mia's Club

Mia's Club launched at our school after the Easter holidays in response to feedback from parents who were looking for afterschool childcare. The children who attend the club have given fantastic feedback and many have even asked to come on additional days. During the sessions, children have the opportunity to complete homework, enjoy creative activities, have a snack, and spend time playing with their friends in a relaxed and welcoming environment.

If you are would like your child to attend Mia's Club or would like to find out more, please contact Mia at **miaclub2019@gmail.com**.


Mia's CLUB
Christmas Holiday Club
Fun • Friends • Activities • Festive Cheer!
Join us for some Christmas fun on...
21st DECEMBER
22nd DECEMBER
29th DECEMBER
30th DECEMBER
Bennett's End Community Centre
Email miaclub2019@gmail.com to book a space!
Spaces fill up fast!


Mia's Club
at Aycliffe Drive School
3pm - 4:30pm £9
3pm - 5pm £12
Qualified Staff
Lots of Fun
Includes a Snack
Spaces Available
Email: miaclub2019@gmail.com to register or contact the school office.

KS1

Birch

Birch Class have been busy being geographers, learning about where we live in the world and locating the seven continents. We now know that we live in Europe, in the United Kingdom, and in Hemel Hempstead. We have also been learning to describe locations using directional language such as up, down, left and right.

In English, we wrote poems about our favourite colours, using adjectives to describe nouns. The adults were incredibly proud of the effort and enthusiasm shown by all the children. We are currently exploring the *Gruffalo Crumble* and other recipes based on the book by Julia Donaldson and illustrated by Axel Scheffler. We have used some of the recipes as inspiration to create our own Terrible Tusk and Fox's sandwiches. Soon, we will be making a mud pie!

In Maths, we have been learning our number bonds to 10 and recording them as number sentences. We have also been practising counting forwards and backwards to 20 and continuing to develop our understanding of one more and one less than a given number.

In Science, we explored the changes that occur during autumn and discussed the types of clothing we wear during this season. We know that autumn is the season we are currently in, and with all the recent wet weather, our raincoats have certainly been getting plenty of use!

We have also started rehearsing for our Christmas play. The children are thoroughly enjoying learning the songs and are already showing great enthusiasm and confidence. We can't wait to share their hard work with you!

Sycamore

It has been another busy few weeks of learning in Sycamore!

English: We enjoyed reading the poem Purple Is and used it as inspiration to write our own fantastic colour poems. We also began reading The Gruffalo's Crumble, exploring the features of recipes and thinking about what makes them easy to follow.

Maths: We have been developing our number skills by learning about regrouping numbers and practising subtraction. We have been working hard to explain our mathematical thinking and find different ways to solve problems.

PSHE: We explored the similarities we share with others and discussed how people sometimes make assumptions about others without knowing all the facts. We thought carefully about how everyone is unique and deserves to be understood.

History: We began our exciting topic on explorers! We started thinking about why people travel to new places and what they might hope to discover.

Science: We have been observing the changes that happen during autumn, looking at how the world around us changes with the seasons. We also explored the parts of the human body and learnt more about how our bodies are made up.

The children have been working very hard! Well done everyone 😊

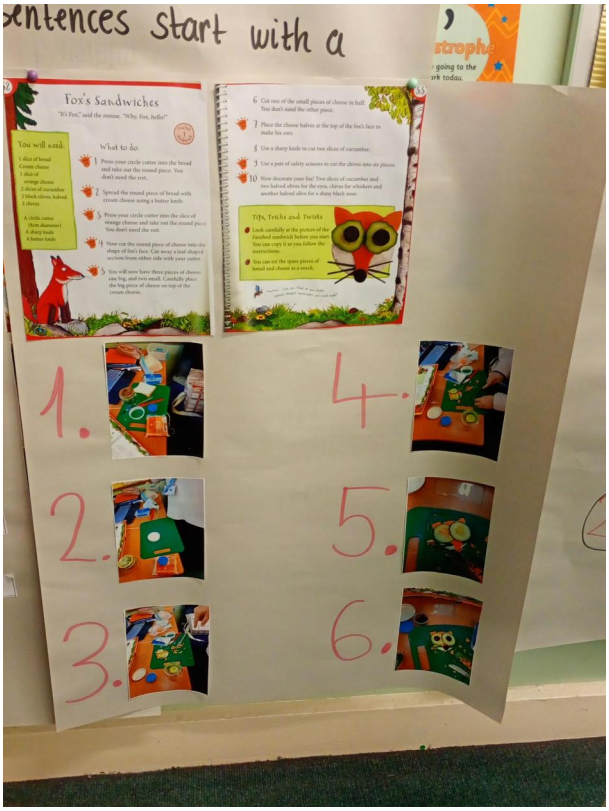
Chestnut

In maths we have been learning how to regroup 2 single -digit numbers. We have used our knowledge of number bonds to 10 to help up identify the next multiple of ten. We have also been practicing writing number sentences. We have been rehearsing the complements to 10 and comparing them to the complements to 100. They have been developing their understanding of number bonds to 100 by using the knowledge of 10.

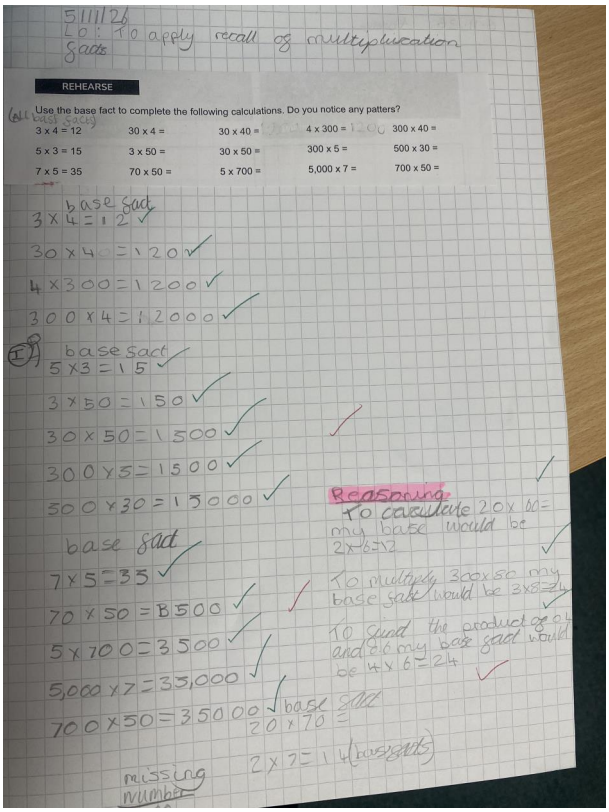
In English we have been looking at *Gruffalo Crumble* and other recipe book. We have been learning about verbs and command sentences. The children are learning how to create their own recipes by writing a set of instructions .

In Design and Technology, the children have been creating a simple mechanism, such as slider, to move different objects. The children have been using positional language such as up, down, left and right to describe the movement.

In Geography, we have been learning about our world. We have explored all 7 continents and the surrounding oceans. The children have become familiar with North and South Poles and have learned how the temperature vary depending how close a country is to the Equator or the Poles.

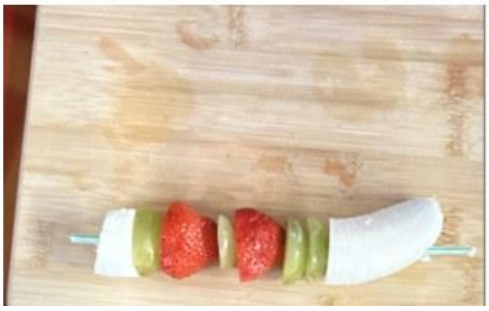


1 - Chestnut



2 - Chestnut





3 - Birch



4 - Birch

LKS2

Laurel

In English, the children have been exploring three wonderful stories: *The Koala Who Could*, *The Lion Inside* and *The Squirrels Who Squabbled*. We have discussed the moral messages within each story and reflected on what they can teach us about friendship, courage, resilience and kindness. The children have also been developing their descriptive writing skills by creating detailed setting and character descriptions. They have impressed us with their use of exciting and ambitious vocabulary to bring their ideas to life.

In Maths, the children have been learning their 3, 4 and 8 times tables. We have used a range of practical resources and strategies, including bead strings, arrays and songs, to help us remember the multiplication facts. The children have shown fantastic perseverance and enthusiasm, and it has been wonderful to see their confidence grow as they become quicker at recalling their timestables.

In PE, we have started our new gymnastics unit. The children have been exploring different ways of moving their bodies and investigating how various body parts can be used to create interesting movements and balances. They have demonstrated excellent control, coordination and creativity while developing their gymnastics skills. It has been fantastic to see them challenge themselves and perform with increasing confidence.

Willow

Willow Class have been busy with stories, practical investigations and creative projects!

In English, the children have been exploring fables, thinking about the characters, settings and the lessons these stories teach us. They have been developing their descriptions and choosing words to help the reader picture the scene.

In DT, Willow have been investigating pneumatics, exploring how air can be used to create movement and developing their practical problem-solving skills. In maths, we have begun our work on fractions, focusing on equal parts and how these make up a whole.

The children have also been creating poppy paintings on slices of wood. They began by sketching poppies from different angles, carefully observing the shapes and positions of the petals. They then painted their designs, using reds and oranges to create highlights and shading, giving the petals depth. The natural wooden surfaces provided a lovely background for their artwork, and the children showed care and concentration throughout.

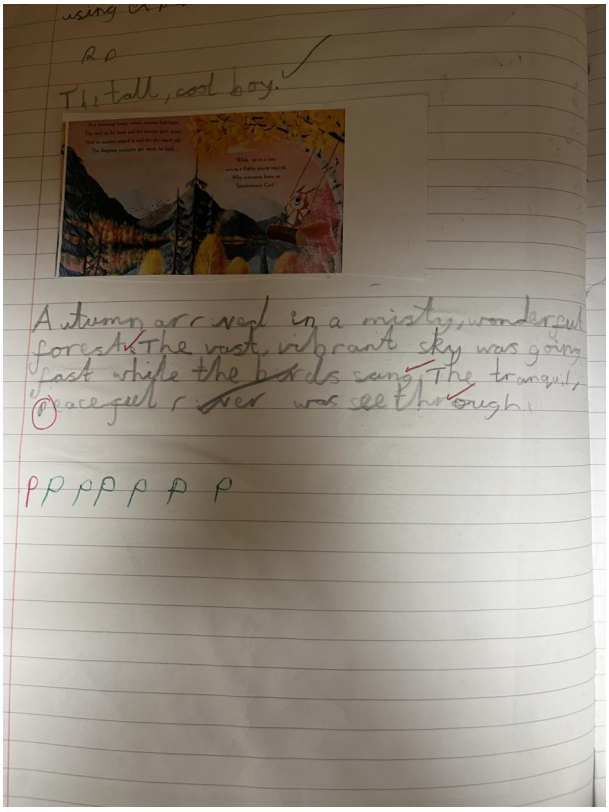
Hawthorn

In English, we have started out new until fables. The children have enjoyed reading our three books, The Koala Who Could, The Lion Inside and The Squirrels Who Squabbled all by Rachel Bright. We have been looking at the features of fables and why they all have a moral. The children are working on writing different parts of the fables, character descriptions and setting descriptions to prepare them for writing their own fable.

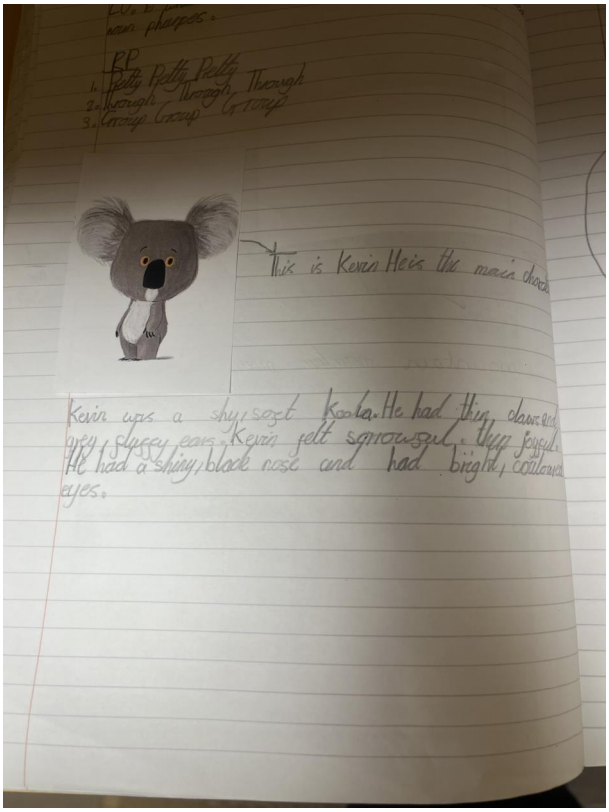
In History, we have started our new unit, Local History. We began the unit looking at historical settlements in Hemel Hempstead such as Romans, Early Moden and Vikings. The children were excited to share their facts with each other about Hemel and its history.

On 4th November, Year 4 welcomed Clare and Gemma from Dacorum School Sports Network and competed in a multi sports event. The children took part in a variety of events

such as football, speed stacking and relay races. They all demonstrated excellent teamwork and showed great sportsmanship. Thank you to the Year 6 leaders who helped.



5 - Laurel



6 - Laurel



7 - Hawthorn



8 - Willow



9 - Willow



10 - Willow



11 - Willow



12 - Willow

UKS2

Oak

Oak Class have well and truly put on their history hats this half term as we begin our exciting journey into learning about the Ancient Egyptians. The children have become historical detectives, using clues and evidence to discover what life was like thousands of years ago.So far, the children have particularly enjoyed learning about Ancient Egyptian society and comparing it with life today. We have explored the different roles people had within society, from powerful pharaohs to skilled craftsmen and farmers, and discussed how daily life was both similar to and very different from our own. The children have asked thoughtful questions and shown great curiosity as they have investigated this fascinating civilisation.

In English, we have been writing our own narratives inspired by the beautiful story The Wisp. Through our writing, the children have explored the importance of memories and what makes them meaningful. It has been wonderful to see the empathy and compassion shown

by the class as they have reflected on happy memories and experiences. The children have produced some truly beautiful pieces of writing, carefully using descriptive language and dialogue to bring their characters and memories to life.

We are incredibly proud of the creativity, thoughtfulness and enthusiasm that Oak Class have shown in both History and English, and we look forward to sharing more of their learning as the term progresses.

Redwood

In Redwood class in Maths have been looking at how we can use known division and multiplication facts to build a range of mathematical knowledge in different contexts. This has aided our use of base fact knowledge.

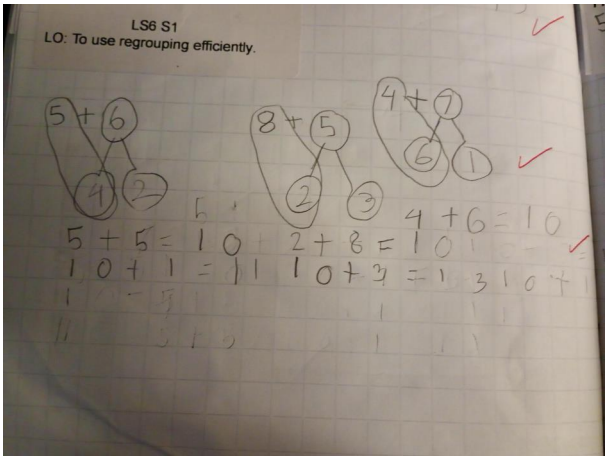
In English we are looking at further developing our narrative writing skills using the text, 'Wisp - A Story of Hope' We have been concerned with how to build atmosphere using sensory details, sentence length variation and strategic pauses - so tension and mood develop more clearly across a paragraph.

In Science we have been looking at Earth and Space. We started the unit by exploring the solar system and some of elements including planets that constitute it.In History we will be focusing on the Ancient Egyptian's.

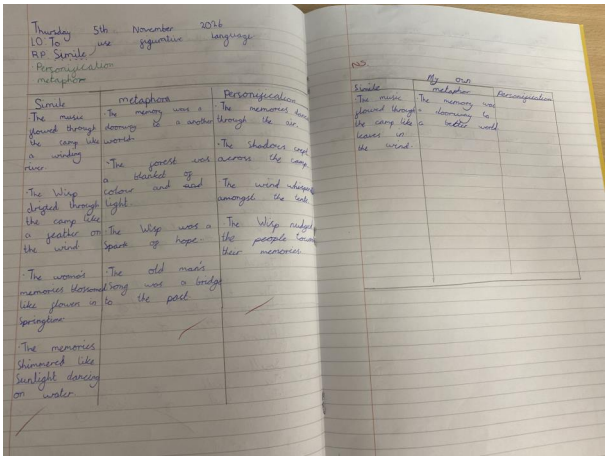
In DT we are looking at making our own stuffed toys in our unit which develops our textiles skills. We will learn our to attach different materials together using a range of stitching.

In PSHE we are exploring difference through our unit on 'Celebrating Difference'. We are learning that there are many ways we are different from each other and how everyone benefits when we celebrate our differences.

In PE we are doing Dance - Focussing on Street Dance and Football.



13 - Redwood



14 - Redwood

Safeguarding

Safeguarding Team

Our safeguarding team is:

- Miss Fitzsimmons - Assistant Headteacher & Designated Safeguarding Lead (Child Protection)
- Mrs Atkinson - Headteacher & Safeguarding Lead (Overall school safeguarding)
- Mrs Long - Assistant Headteacher & Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead & Designated Teacher for Children who are Looked After.
- Miss Rumph - Mental Health Lead & Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead & Prevent Duty Lead

All members of the Designated Safeguarding Team complete Level 3 training. If you have any concerns regarding the safety of a child please speak to one of the members of the team.

Ms Robson is our attendance lead, and will be in contact with you if concerns arise over your child's attendance. Remember there are new regulations on school attendance, which came into effect as of 1st September 2024.

Aycliffe Drive Primary School is part of Operation Encompass. Operation Encompass is a national Police and education early intervention safeguarding partnership which supports children and young people who experience Domestic Violence and Abuse, and which is in place in every Police force in England and Wales.

External Flyers



iRock



GET READY TO ROCK

JOIN AN

iROCK BAND



Sign up now to secure your child's place.

0330 174 2655

info@irockschool.com

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