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No. 6

School Newsletter

February 2026

Message from Miss Spark

What a joyful month it has been at Freegrounds Junior School! It was absolutely wonderful to see the children arriving in such creative “digit” outfits for Number Day in support of the NSPCC. The imagination on display was incredible, and I want to extend a heartfelt thank-you to all parents and carers who helped put those costumes together and kindly donated to a cause that means so much.

Throughout the school, the children have continued to amaze me with their enthusiasm and hard work. I was fortunate enough to spend time in several classrooms and see their work: Year 5 have been creating stunning portraits inspired by Frida Kahlo, full of colour and expression; Year 4 are diligently reading and discussing titles for the Hampshire Book Awards; and Year 6 continue to impress with their fantastic beast instructions. I have also seen some of the projects Year 3 have produced; some truly magical underwater scenes as part of their project work. It is a privilege to see such creativity and commitment in every year group.

Our sports teams have also been out representing the school with pride—well done to both our hockey and football teams for their determination and teamwork.

As a very wet February comes to a close, we are all looking ahead with excitement to the arrival of spring. Next week we will be celebrating World Book Day—a wonderful opportunity to share our love of reading and enjoy the magic that stories bring into our lives.

Respect

This week, we launched our whole-school focus on *respect*, and it has been truly uplifting to see how both children and adults have embraced this theme. Across Freegrounds Junior School, everyone has been thinking carefully about how they can show respect for people, property, and our wider community. I have particularly enjoyed seeing more and more children proudly wearing their colourful respect stickers—they are a lovely reminder of the positive choices being made each day.

As part of this focus, we are encouraging all of our pupils to take greater care with school equipment and our beautiful school grounds. Just as importantly, we are talking about showing respect through kindness, understanding and celebrating each other’s beliefs and viewpoints. These are values that help our school community to thrive.

One highlight of the week was receiving a lovely message from a family who shared how their daughter in Year 3 regularly helps her elderly neighbour by putting out her bins. This simple but thoughtful act is a wonderful example of respect in action, and we are incredibly proud of her. Stories like this really bring our values to life, and we would love to hear more—please do keep sending them in so we can continue to celebrate these moments together.

Year 3

To conclude our 'Our Community' topic, we enjoyed a wonderful and purposeful trip to Hedge End village. The children interviewed members of the community about their favourite things about living locally and were fantastic ambassadors for our school. We also donated toys and books to the Sue Ryder charity shop, helping us understand the importance of giving back.



During our visit, we carried out a traffic count and discovered that the village is particularly busy around midday with vehicles! On our walk, we observed and compared different types of houses, including flats, bungalows, detached, semi-detached and terraced homes. The children showed excellent observational skills and curiosity throughout the trip.



As part of our Community unit, we were lucky to receive multiple visits from members of the local community in Hedge End. One highlight was a visit from the Hampshire Constabulary, where officers spoke to us about their important role in keeping people safe. The children enjoyed trying on parts of the police uniform and asking thoughtful questions about the job. We also discussed how staying safe, respecting our local community and making positive choices helps everyone feel happy and secure.

A huge thank you to everyone who supported our recent fundraising project. The beautifully designed packaging were a great success, and we are delighted to share that we raised £67.50 for each class's chosen charity. This is a brilliant achievement and we are so proud of the children's creativity and spirit.



For World Maths Day, the children had great fun coming to school dressed in fantastic maths-themed costumes. The creativity was brilliant, and we loved seeing such enthusiasm for learning. The children also took part in a quiz and a range of problem-solving activities, showing excellent teamwork and resilience.

We have now launched our new topic, *Blue Planet*, with our big question: "Are humans destroying the planet?" On our Hook Day, the children attempted to clean up a simulated oil spill using a variety of materials. Despite their best efforts, it proved extremely challenging: a powerful lesson about the real-life difficulties of environmental disasters. We discussed how plastic pollution in the sea is hugely damaging to sea life and created persuasive posters to raise awareness about the impact humans are having on our planet. The children engaged thoughtfully and maturely with this important issue.

We have been hugely impressed with the creativity shown in the recent home learning project. The recycled sea creatures made from reusable plastic materials have been absolutely fantastic. The effort, imagination and environmental awareness demonstrated have truly delighted us: a huge thank you for supporting your children with this project at home!

In PE, we have begun our orienteering unit. The children are working in small teams to develop their map-reading skills, problem-solving abilities and teamwork. They have been exploring the school grounds with enthusiasm and determination, building both confidence and resilience along the way.

Year 4

Pine, Beech and Maple classes have had a busy February finishing off our 'Survivor' topic and preparing to move into our History-driven topic – Saxons and Scots!

In English, the children worked hard to write a recount of our Survival Day last month. We looked at a range of recounts of survival experiences from podcasts, diaries and newsletters, identifying where in the world they would exist, their purpose and features. We then used them as models to write our own recounts with you as our audience. Our intention was to inform and entertain the reader. Here are some extracts of the writing we produced.

***"At the beginning of the day, we huddled around the bright orange, crackling fire and watched Mrs Blake."* Anna**

***"After that we did team building. It was frustrating and exciting because we were not allowed to speak and we had to use sign language - which was pretty funny!"* William**

***"Afterwards, the rain settled down a bit and we had so much fun building our own survival dens. We heaved damp, heavy logs to balance onto our den's structure. We dragged many pieces of wood until we made a small, rain-proof den".* Sylvia**

***"After lunch, it was time for the muddy, exciting den building! My friends and I were so excited, we could hardly put our welly boots on!"* Summer**

***"It was a very important day in year 4 because this information could be lifelong learning. As a team we pushed through challenging activities. My favourite was den building because we could be creative!"* Amelie**

***"We curiously watched the water to see if it would turn out clean. I was interested as it was a really enjoyable topic to learn about."* Esme**

This month, we have also marked Safer internet day, where we engaged in a BBC live lesson which explored the safe and responsible use of AI. We learnt about the impact of Artificial Intelligence, including both its benefits and risks such as deepfakes and how to evaluate online information.

**Safer
Internet
Day 2026** | **Tuesday
10 February**

Coordinated by the UK Safer Internet Centre

saferinternetday.org.uk

In Art this month we have been studying the artists David Hockney and Eileen Downes and exploring their collage techniques. We then used their work as inspiration for our own mountain landscape collage. We used techniques like crumpling, creasing, pleating and fraying tissue paper to create texture.



Governor Spotlight!

Dan Payton– Parent governor– Curriculum and Standards committee

What do you do for Work?

I work as an air traffic controller at Swanwick, where I've been for about 16 years. I work a variety of shifts, including nights (which aren't getting any easier as I get older!). I personally love shift work, it allows me to spend lots of time with my family, but it can also mean working over holidays and Christmases. I get to work with a great bunch of people, from varied backgrounds and from all over the world. Each day is different, and that keeps it really interesting.

My wife and I are originally from Lincolnshire, and relocated to Hedge End when I started at Swanwick. We have two children, both who attend the school.

In my spare time my main interest is music. I play a few instruments and try to get out to as many local gigs as I can.



Why did you become a governor?

Having two children that attend the school, I am more than aware of all the hard work and dedication that all the staff at Freeground Juniors put in, as well as some of the challenges they face. I decided last year to help in any way I can, by joining the Governing Body.

What is your role within the Governors?

I joined the Governing Body at the end of 2022, so I'm still very new to the role and trying to get to know everyone. I am a Parent Governor and sit on the CAS committee. I am also the History and Computing Subject Governor.

What have you found out about the school so far?

I always knew the quality of education the school provides was excellent. My role as Governor has helped me to understand more about the amount of time, thought and effort put in by all the staff to achieve this.

What have you enjoyed about being a Governor so far?

Its been great to meet all the other Governors and staff, and learn more about the running of the school.

We have vacancies for non-parent governors. Please spread the word to colleagues, friends and family members who may be interested in supporting the school as a co-opted governor. Our Chair of Governors would love the opportunity to give more information about the role and answer any questions. Please ask anyone who may be interested to email j.hughes@freegrounds-jun.hants.sch.uk for more information.

Year 5

Since our last newsletter, Year 5 have had their colourful and exciting visit from Mexicolore. The children experienced a whole morning of Mayan culture from experts, from listening to tales of the past, more recent travels, playing traditional Mexican instruments and dressing up in costumes. The children were immersed in their learning and their active listening was praised by all members of staff. It was a fantastic experience that helped us with the rest of our topic and writing last half term.

Since returning, Year 5 have been focusing on finishing their Marvellous Mexico unit by creating Frida Kahlo inspired self-portraits. The children have been exploring the use of water colours to mix different tints, tones and shades to accurately paint themselves before creating a colourful collage background that represents their interests. Thank you to all those who were able to make our Art workshops and help with these fabulous creations. The children have shown a lots of learning values throughout this process including resilience, creativity and critical thinking – and we were pleased to be able to celebrate their final result with you.

In reading, the children will be starting a new class reader – Holes by Louis Sachar – and looking at a related text ‘Stanley Yelnats Survival Guide’ in their reading lessons. The story is set in America and links to our topic – USA Road trip, in the past this has always been a popular book with Year 5 and we look forward to sharing some of the twists and turns of the exciting plot.

As we move through the half term the children will be journeying through America on their road trip through a series of Geography, Music and Computing lessons – a challenge to learn as many different US state names by Easter!



Year 6

We had a brilliant end to last half term in Year 6, with the children continuing to show enthusiasm, maturity and creativity across the curriculum.

In English, the children thoroughly enjoyed writing a set of instructions explaining how to care for their very own fantastic beasts. Their ideas were incredibly imaginative, and it was wonderful to see them confidently applying a range of grammatical features we have worked on throughout Year 6. From clear organisational devices and precise verbs to expanded noun phrases and varied sentence structures, the children demonstrated just how much progress they have made in their writing this year.

In Reading, we have focused on developing fluency and comprehension skills. The children practised reading aloud with expression and pace, as well as answering a range of questions based on a text. Some of our favourite texts included *The Girl Who Drank the Moon*, *The Tiger Who Sleeps Under My Chair*, and *Becoming* by Michelle Obama. These rich and varied texts sparked thoughtful discussions and allowed the children to practise retrieval, inference and explanation skills.

In Science, the children were fascinated by our unit on evolution and the life of Charles Darwin. They learned about Darwin's theories and how species adapt over time. The class particularly enjoyed examining fossils and discussing how ancient creatures have gradually evolved into the animals we recognise today. It was wonderful to see their curiosity and thoughtful questioning throughout this topic.

In Games, the children have been developing their basketball skills. They learned how to attack and defend effectively, work collaboratively as a team, and improve their shooting technique. In our final lesson, they brought all these skills together in a mini class tournament, showing great sportsmanship and teamwork.

We were also fortunate to have a visit from *Choices*, who spoke to the children about how the decisions they make now can impact their future. The session encouraged the children to think carefully about how to recognise positive and negative choices and understand the long-term effects of their actions. The children listened maturely and contributed thoughtfully to the discussion.



What a fantastic half term it has been! We are incredibly proud of Year 6 and are looking forward to another fun and productive half term ahead.

Respect by Molly (Year 6) and Miss Cockram

At our school, most children are respectful, but sometimes people forget to follow expectations. This week at school, we have been talking lots about how we can be more respectful by thinking before we speak, choosing kind words and considering how our actions might affect others.

Small acts of respect can make a big difference. This includes helping others, especially younger pupils, holding doors open, saying *please* and *thank you*, and being thoughtful when moving around the school. I do see lots of respectful behaviour in the corridors, but I would love to see even more.

Research shows that kindness and respect can improve happiness and help people feel safer and more included. In class, we have been discussing why constant kindness and active listening are so important.

We also attended an assembly about respecting the road and setting a positive example within our community.

We believe respect is always a choice and when we choose respect, we create better opportunities for ourselves and others.

Pancake Day Celebrations

To celebrate Pancake Day, the children were invited to participate in a House 'Pancake' flipping competition on the playground at lunch. It was great fun for all who participated! Well done to Bramley for the most 'pancakes' flipped.



Family Support Worker events

Coffee Morning



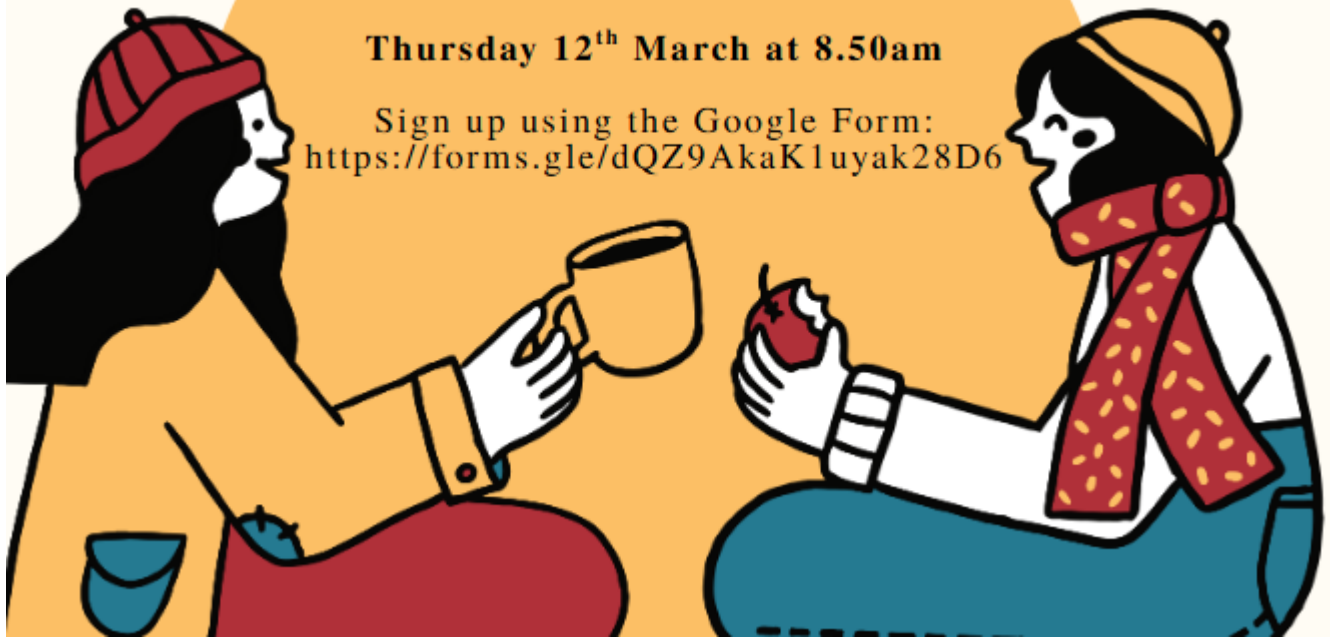
Coffee kindly supplied by Starbucks!

'You are already doing better than you think!'

Join Michelle and your child/ren for our next FSW Coffee Morning on

Thursday 12th March at 8.50am

Sign up using the Google Form:
<https://forms.gle/dQZ9AkaK1uyak28D6>



School Lane Vehicle Restrictions

We would like to remind all parents, carers, and members of the local community that **vehicles are not permitted to drive down School Lane between 8:30am–8:50am and 3:10pm–3:30pm.**

These times are particularly busy with children and families travelling to and from the infant and junior schools, and we have a duty to ensure everyone's safety.

Staff work hard to keep the car park gate closed during these periods to prevent vehicles from entering or exiting. We are grateful to families and community members for their cooperation and support in helping us keep our children safe.



Diary Dates

Monday 2nd March– **Bramley Reading Café 9:00am—9:20am**

Tuesday 3rd March– **Winston Reading Café 9:00am—9:20am**

Wednesday 4th March– **Russett Reading Café 9:00am—9:20am**

Thursday 5th March– World Book Day (Children invited to dress up as a book character or wear PJs)

9:00-9:15am-Parents invited to watch a costume 'parade' on the playground

(weather permitting)

Thursday 5th March—FoFJS PTA selling World Book Day Conka Bars on the playground after school

£1 per bar cash only. Will you find the golden ticket to win prizes.

Friday 6th March– **Empire Reading Café 9:00am—9:20am**

Monday 9th March–Friday 13th March– Science week in school

Monday 9th March—FoFJS Mothers Day Decorative pot gift buying deadline

Thursday 12th March– FSW Michelle's coffee morning

Friday 13th March- FoFJS Disco (Year 3/4 4:30pm-5:40pm and Year 5/6 5:50pm-7:00pm)

Thursday 19th March– Year 4 Listen2me concerts to parents (more details to follow)

Friday 20th March– Year 5 Portsmouth Cathedral trip

Year 3 Stubbington beach day trip

Tuesday 24th March– Year 4 Anglo-Saxon trip to Winchester (Maple class)

Y3 Elm class Fab Finish to parents 9:30-10:00am

Wednesday 25th March– Rock 2 the beat concerts

Thursday 26th March– Year 4 Anglo-Saxon trip to Winchester (Pine and Beech classes)

Y3 Ash class Fab Finish to parents 9:30am-10:00am

Monday 30th March—Friday 10th April– **EASTER HOLIDAYS**

Monday 13th April– **RETURN TO SCHOOL**

Tuesday 14th April– Year 5 Samba workshop

Monday 20th April– Year 5 trip to Living Rainforest

Tuesday 28th April– Yellow photographers in school for class photos

Monday 4th May– School closed for **BANK HOLIDAY**

Mondy 11th May—Thursday 14th May– Year 6 SATs week

Monday 18th May– Year 6 trip to Paultons Park

Wednesday 20th May– Friday 22nd May– Year 4 Residential to Stubbington Study Centre

Monday 25th March—Friday 29th May– **HALF TERM**

Monday 1st June– **RETURN TO SCHOOL**

Y6 SECONDARY TRANSITION

Join Lisa for our SEN Support Workshop

- Learn what a smooth transition looks like
- Explore practical SEN strategies
- Make the most of the time before September
- Get signposted to extra guidance



March 2026
Friday 6th 13:00
Tuesday 10th 17:00
Thursday 12th 10:30

JOIN US VIA
TEAMS



WWW.HAMPSHIRESENDIASS.CO.UK/WORKSHOPS



You Are Not Alone Drop-in

Every 1st Tuesday of the month - 7.00pm - 8.30pm

A free monthly online drop-in for parents & carers

The **You Are Not Alone** community is a friendly and safe space run by Erik & Sally Wagter where you can come and learn about autism & PDA, ask questions, connect with like-minded people or simply listen and learn from other people's conversations.



In this community we talk about all sorts of things such as:

- helping your child regulate their emotions & feelings (meltdowns etc)
- understanding autism and PDA
- navigating school and EHCPs
- Supporting your child with friendships
- understanding and managing challenging behaviour
- managing sensory needs
- developing a positive relationship with your child (family dynamics)
- exploring EOTAS or home education
- looking after your wellbeing
- and so much more



Here's what parents have said:

'My husband Jamie was saying that in the last few sessions, he has learned so much more about autism and PDA than he has over the past year - Jo (parent)

'Thank you so much for the group this evening. I can't tell you how grateful I feel and I really do feel less alone and more validated. My hope is back' - Louise (parent)

You can request the **Zoom link** on our website

<https://youarenotalone.community> or you can send an email to

team@youarenotalone.community

