



# Balksbury Federation

## *Across the Playground*

Friday 16<sup>th</sup> May



### Well done Year 6!

A huge well done to our Year 6 children who completed their SATs this week. The children have been true Balksbury Citizens in the run up to the tests, remaining focused and working hard to achieve their best. The whole federated team are extremely proud of the children and their commendable attitude towards learning.

### A New Pollinator Patch

If you have walked across the two playgrounds this week, you might have noticed the bank behind the firepit has had a little transformation! A huge thank you to our fantastic PTA who were able to provide funding for a variety of pollinator friendly plants, as well as the pollinator hotel which has also been installed this week. We are looking forward to receiving new outdoor learning resources for our new nature area next to the swimming pool, also very kindly funded by the PTA.



Whilst planting, Miss Thompson and Miss Bolton were visited by Year 3 who were investigating the grounds to study the anatomy of different types of plant. Miss Thompson was very impressed by how confidently the children were able to talk about pollinator plants, the importance of bees and the importance of taking care of our planet. Well done Year 3!



You may or may not have spotted green buckets dotted about on the playground. Did you know that the children compost all fruit and vegetable snacks at the federation? We have been composting snack waste, tea bags from the staffroom and green waste for the past couple of years now. Children take it in turns to empty our green buckets into our composter in the community garden. The compost is then used on federated grounds, in projects just like our pollinator patch.

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## Thank you WPA Foundation

The federation is delighted to announce that we will soon be replacing the fruit cages in our community garden, and that two brand new rugby and football combination posts will be coming soon. These purchased were made possible by the wonderful WPA Foundation, who support schools in purchasing healthy physical equipment.

Click the link below to find out more about the work the WPA foundation do:

<https://www.wpa.org.uk/about/supporting-good-causes>

## Sports Day

A reminder that this year's sports day will be on **Friday the 20<sup>th</sup> of June** and will be held on the Junior School field.

The Junior School will be competing first, between 9:15 and 11:45.

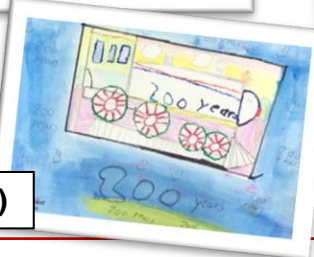
The Infant School will be competing in the afternoon slot, between 1:00 and 3:00.

As always, we welcome our families to join us for a special picnic lunch between 12:00 and 11:50.

More information on Sports day will be coming out soon, so keep your eyes peeled!



Molly (Year 3)



## Art at the Station

A big thank you and well done to all of the children who entered our Art at the Station competition. We were blown away by the entries we received and every single piece of art was wonderful. The project coordinator was so impressed, an additional 3 pieces of art were taken for display. Congratulations to the following children whose winning pieces will be displayed at Andover Station:

Ivy B (Year 4)



Izzy (Year 5)



Rory (Year 3)



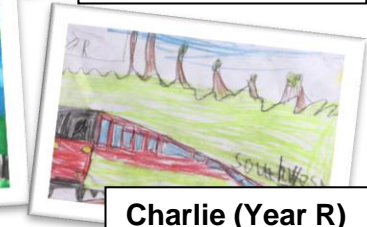
Oliver D (Year 2)



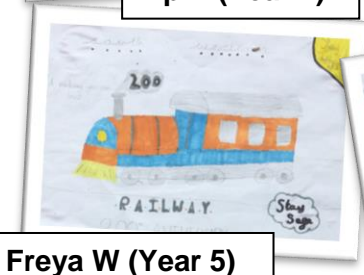
April (Year 4)



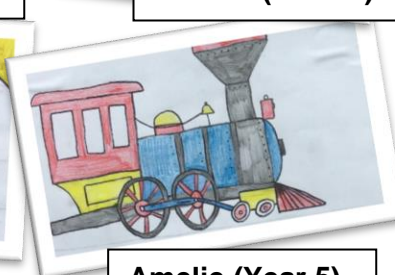
Charlie (Year R)



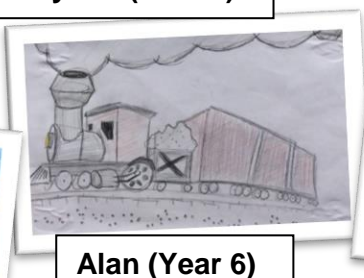
Freya W (Year 5)



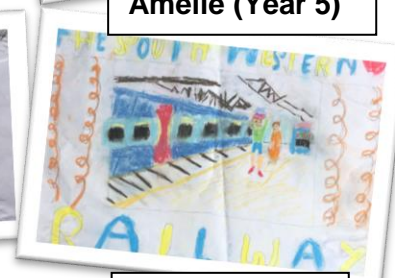
Amelie (Year 5)



Alan (Year 6)



Isla (Year 4)



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# Classroom News



## Across the Playground

### Year R

Year R have had a fantastic week, experiencing their first ever school trip to **Hillier Gardens**. The school trip was focused around life cycles, **minibeasts** and **habitats**. Throughout the day the children to part in pond dipping, meadow sweeping, minibeast hunting and they even created their own herby caterpillar to take home. We were incredibly proud of the children's behaviour and how confidently they shared their knowledge of insects with our activity leaders.



### Year 3

In Geography, Year 3 have begun to look at **South America** – specifically, Rio de Janeiro. We used the **VR headsets** to 'visit' Rio, looking at the physical features like the beaches and the human features like the magnificent Christ the Redeemer statue. We also used atlases to locate South America on a **world map** and found out which countries make up the continent.



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# Classroom News



## Across the Playground

### Year 6

Year 6 have enjoyed many sunny afternoons in P.E, learning the knowledge and skills necessary to play and umpire a game of **cricket**. In the afternoons during **SATs** week, the children have had an exciting project; they are creating their own **motorised robots** to race! They began by building a frame with wooden dowels, which they had to saw to specific measurements. Then, they built a motor and attached wheels. Finally, they decorated them!



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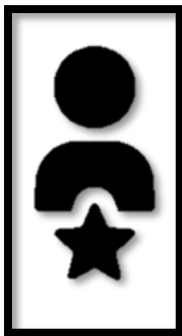
# Welcome to...

## Curriculum Corner

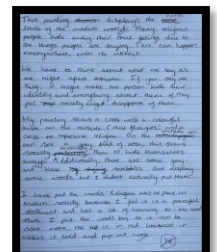
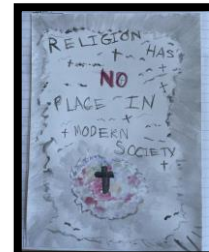
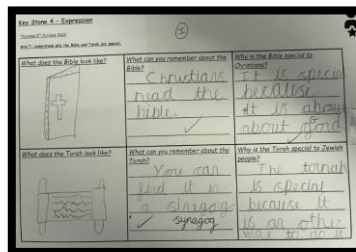
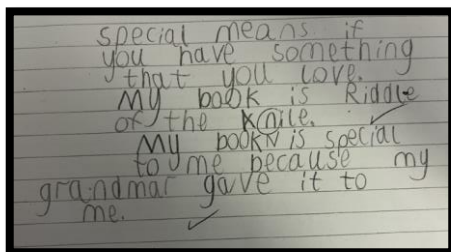
### Religious Education

At Balksbury, we follow Hampshire County Council's agreed syllabus for religious education called 'Living Difference IV'.

Our curriculum gives children a broad understanding of the world's religions by building knowledge sequentially; starting with **Christianity** and **Judaism** in the Infant school and exploring **Hinduism** and **Islam** additionally in the Junior School.



Religious Education at Balksbury is underpinned by 4 'Golden Threads': **special**, **love**, **community** and **belonging**; these are woven throughout the curriculum to enable children to explore different religions through the lens of their own experiences and the **culture** and **ethos** of the Federation.



At Balksbury, we recognise the importance of Religious Education in developing our children's **cultural** and **social** capital and, as such we have tailored our curriculum to ensure children grow into **respectful**, **tolerant** and **curious** individuals.



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# The Reading Corner



## Recommended Reads

This week our recommended reads come from Year 1 and Year 3.



## Rod Campbell

Rod Campbell has been writing and making books for children for over 30 years! He was born in Scotland but grew up in Zimbabwe. Rod's wonderful lift the flap book **Dear Zoo** has sold more than 13 million copies around the world! He is also the author/illustrator of **Noisy Farm, It's Mine!** and **I'm Hungry**.

'I normally like reading books about bikes and rugby. I heard that there used to be a giant shark called a megalodon, so this book might help me learn more about sharks!'

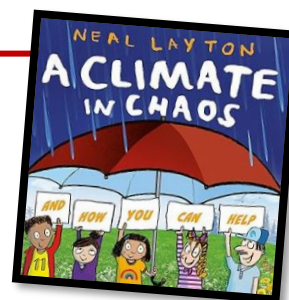


'I like reading graphic novels. I got two Dog Man books from the last book fayre! I can see this one has lots of illustrations, so this might be good for children who enjoy books with cartoons.'



## Reading Competition

Next week is your last chance to earn a raffle ticket for our reading competition. Remember to read Monday to Friday and sign in your diary. The raffle tickets will be drawn in assembly on the last day of term!



## Focus Bookshelf

### Climate Change

Climate change describes the change in weather for specific areas such as temperature differences and the amount of rainfall. The rise in temperatures world wide is also known as global warming. We can help by turning things like computers and TV's off, walking where possible and not wasting water. There are some excellent books in the library to learn all about the importance of protecting our planet.

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# ESafety

## Today's Digital Landscape



### Did you know?

The official birthday of the Internet is 1<sup>st</sup> January 1983.



### A Changing Digital World

Since it began, the internet has become an increasingly fascinating, helpful, exciting and vital place for everyone to meet, communicate, collaborate and generate ideas.



Over the past 42 years, there have been advances in technology that were originally thought impossible.

However, there will always be those who want to use the internet for nefarious reasons, which can make it a dangerous place.

With developments in AI, algorithms that personalise content, enhanced gaming features that make you want to play longer and social media apps where you can talk to people around the world, **it has never been more important that children can do these things safely.**

### Digital Citizens

It is crucial to teach children the importance of privacy online.

To be safe digital citizens, children need to guard against identity theft by knowing how to manage their digital footprint.

With tools such as AI and Chatbots becoming integrated into children's online experiences (from gaming to helping with homework), it is important they also know about the risks these tools can bring.

The internet helps to connect children to global ideas, cultures and communities **but** it also exposes them to content, ideas and trends that may be harmful.

We need to teach children to be **critical thinkers** to help them safely navigate the large amounts of information online and to be able to recognise harmful messages or content.

### Growing risks

#### Artificial intelligence



One of the most significant trends is the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) in online environments. Tools powered by AI, such as chatbots and content algorithms, are increasingly integrated into platforms that children use for education, socialising and entertainment. While these tools offer benefits, they also pose risks, such as manipulative behaviour by AI systems designed to extract young people's personal information or influence their decision-making.

#### Deepfakes



Deepfakes are another growing concern. These manipulated videos or images, often powered by AI, can be used for harmful purposes such as spreading misinformation, cyberbullying, or identity theft.

#### New apps



The proliferation of new apps and platforms targeting younger audiences has introduced both opportunities and challenges. Many apps, such as disappearing messaging platforms or live streaming services, lack robust safety features and expose children to risks such as grooming or seeing inappropriate content.

#### Gaming



Emerging gaming trends also deserve attention. Online games increasingly incorporate features like loot boxes or in-game purchases that resemble gambling, encouraging addictive behaviours. Moreover, the social nature of many gaming platforms introduces risks such as online harassment or exploitation.

netsupportsoftware.com

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## How to recognise the warning signs



If your child is using online spaces such as social media or gaming platforms, it is vital that you are aware of some of the red flags that might indicate there are some issues.

### Changes in behaviour, such as:

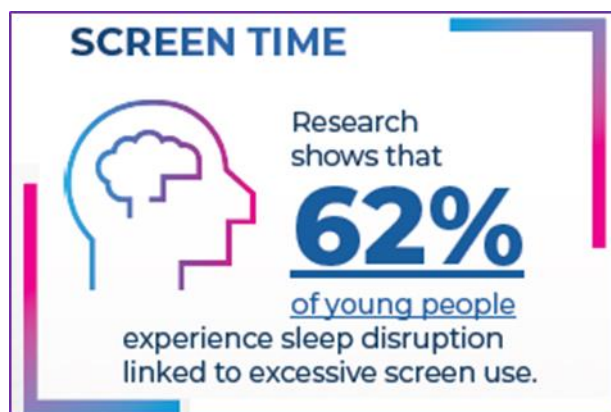
- Becoming withdrawn, secretive or unusually emotional after spending time online
- Finding unexplained purchases that prompt unusual charges on your bank card
- Becoming reluctant to discuss online activities, especially gaming or social media interactions

**Being overly reliant on virtual friendships** rather than real friendships

### Changes in mood, such as:

- Short temperedness
- Sudden changes in language or tone
- Using inappropriate or aggressive words

**Changes to sleep patterns** is a good indicator of health and happiness, as excessive screen time can disrupt routines and negatively impact mental health



If you are worried about what your child is doing online or need further advice, please speak to one of our DSLs who will be able to help you.



Or find further tips and advice on our website

<https://www.balksburyfederation.co.uk/esaf-ety-2/>



## Checklist for parents

| Task  | Done |
|---|------|
| Do your devices, apps, and online accounts have robust privacy settings enabled to protect personal information?              |      |
| Do you know where to find help from trusted resources like the NSPCC?   |      |
| Are you using parental control tools to monitor activity and screen time?   |      |
| Do you understand the features and risks of platforms your child uses, such as TikTok or Roblox?                              |      |
| Are you familiar with emerging trends, scams or new platforms that could pose risks to children?                              |      |
| Have you established non-negotiables, such as no devices at mealtimes or in bedrooms overnight, to create healthy boundaries? |      |
| Are you modelling healthy tech habits by demonstrating behaviours like device-free family time?                               |      |
| Do you know where to report online incidents?   |      |
| Do you talk to your child about their online experiences, such as what they enjoy or who they talk to?                        |      |
| Do you have a family digital agreement outlining rules for screen time, app downloads and safe browsing?                      |      |
| Have you taught your child how to report inappropriate content and block users on the platforms they use?                     |      |
| Have you shown your child what to do in situations like receiving a suspicious link or being contacted by a stranger?         |      |
| Are you encouraging offline hobbies to ensure tech use doesn't crowd out time for play, family or physical activity?          |      |
| Have you discussed why it's important to think before posting?  |      |
| Are you highlighting positive uses of technology, like learning new skills or staying connected with family?                  |      |
| Do you talk to your child about how to evaluate online information for reliability and spot misinformation or bias?           |      |

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# CSL Messages



## Absence Requests for Holidays

We understand that families want to spend time together and the cost of going on holiday is more expensive during school holidays, however It's really important for children to attend school regularly to access learning opportunities, receive support from teachers, peers and develop social skills.

*Reasons why term-time holidays are discouraged –*

- **Missing instruction** – Absences disrupt the learning process
- **Catching up** – Even short absences can make it difficult for children to catch up
- **Limited learning opportunities** – absences can restrict access to specialised learning resources and support
- **Social development** – School provides opportunities for children to interact with peers, learn social skills and develop a sense of community.
- **Emotional and mental health** - School contributes to a child's emotional health by providing a structured routine and support system

**Requests for holidays will be unauthorised unless in exceptional circumstances.**



## Legal Implications

You may be fined if you have 10 unauthorised sessions (5 days) (codes G, O or U) within 100 sessions (50 school days)

A fine is charged at **£160 per child, per parent**, if it is paid before 21 days, this is reduced to £80 per parent, per child.

A second fine can be issued if another unauthorised absence of 5 or more days is taken within a 3-year period, this is charged at **£160 per child, per parent, with no option to reduce the fine.**

Should your child have any future unauthorised absence in the 3-year period, it may result in further legal action such as **prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.**

*When else might I receive a penalty notice?*

- where a parent is deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold,
- repeated absence for birthdays or other family events are taken unauthorised
- Taking a child from school early to attend a holiday on a regular basis

**If you would like to discuss any attendance queries, please get in contact with Mrs Grinham or Mrs Whatley via the admin office**

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# House Points and Tokens



## House Points

The House with the most points across the Federation to date is: Fosbury.



**DANE BURY**



## Tokens - Infants

The class with the most tokens in the Infant School to date is: Emperor.



## Tokens - Juniors

The class with the most tokens in the Junior School to date is: Willow.



# Achievements from Outside of School

A huge congratulations to Thomas Baxter, Archie McNab, Teddy Hadnett and George Johnson who are all part of New Street Youth Football Team. Last Sunday they took part in the South Wiltshire cup final for under 9s and they won. Well done boys!



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# Diary Dates

## May 2025

|  |                      |
|--|----------------------|
| <b>Monday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025 – Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025</b> | Year 6 – Bikeability |
| <b>Monday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2025 – Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May 2025</b> | Half Term            |

## June 2025

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>                                 | Butterflies Transition Evening 4:30pm – 5:30pm                                      |
| <b>Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025 – Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b> | Year 1 Phonics Screening Check  |
| <b>Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>                                 | Open Box Year R – Dinosaurs   |
| <b>Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>                                 | Year 3 Butser Farm Visit  |
| <b>Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>                                  | New Year R Children - Butterflies Session 1<br>2:00pm – 3:00pm                      |
| <b>Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>                                | Open Box Year 1 – Moon Landing  |
| <b>Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>                                 | Fraser Portraits Class Photos   |
| <b>Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>                                 | Year 2 to Year 3 Parents Transition Meeting<br>3:30pm – 4:30pm                      |
| <b>Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>                                   | Sports Day with Family Picnic<br>(Juniors 9:15am-11:45am and Infants 1:00pm-3:00pm) |
| <b>Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025</b>                                  | New Year R Children - Butterflies Session 2<br>2:00p – 3:00pm                       |
| <b>Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2025 – Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b> | Swim Gala Week (More information to follow)   |

## July 2025

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2025</b>   | Change Up Morning 9:30am – 12:00pm<br>New Year R Children – Butterflies Session 3 |
| <b>Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2025</b> | Year 2 Production 1:30pm – 2:30pm   |
| <b>Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2025</b>  | Year 2 Production 1:30pm – 2:30pm   |
| <b>Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b>    | Year 2 Country Dancing Festival   |

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|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b>                                    | Block 2 After School Clubs – Finish                   |
| <b>Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025 – Friday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b> | Arts Week (Arts Festival on Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> ) |
| <b>Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b>                                   | Balksbury's Got Talent                                |
| <b>Monday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b>                                   | Year 6 Production 6:30pm – 7:30pm                     |
| <b>Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b>                                  | Year 6 Production 6:30pm – 7:30pm                     |
| <b>Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b>                                  | Year 2 Fun Day 9:00am – 3:00pm                        |
| <b>Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b>                                | Year 2 Graduation 2:00pm – 3:00pm (School Based)      |
| <b>Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b>                                | Year 6 Fun Day 9:00am – 3:00pm                        |
| <b>Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b>                                 | Disco Day 9:00am – 2:30pm                             |
| <b>Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b>                                 | Year 6 Graduation at The Lights<br>10:00am – 11:00am  |
| <b>Friday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b>                                   | Year 6 Graduation 9:15am – 10:15am (School Based)     |
| <b>Friday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b>                                   | Children's Last Day of Summer Term                    |
| <b>Monday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2025</b>                                   | INSET Day   |
| <b>Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025</b>                                  | INSET Day   |
| <b>Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2025</b>                                | Summer Holidays                                       |

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