



Balksbury Federation

Across the Playground



Friday 30th January

A Very Special Message

As you know, in everything we do, we are passionate about making sure our children have the best possible start to their education and enter secondary school ready to grab every opportunity.

Back in the summer, we were so proud to share with you how well our Year 6 children did in their end of Key Stage 2 achievements.

This has now been praised by Bridget Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education, in a personal letter, something that is very rare for schools to receive.

Please take your time to read the letter and celebrate with us.

A message from
Bridget Phillipson



Dear Katy,

Congratulations to you and your team on the excellent outcomes for your disadvantaged pupils at Balksbury Junior School achieved at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. Your school's performance places it among the very best nationally, and this is a significant achievement.

This success reflects the dedication of your staff and the hard work of your pupils. It shows what can be achieved when ambition and commitment come together. Thank you for everything you do to give children the best possible opportunities to succeed.

Your school's achievements demonstrate what is possible, and I hope you will continue to share your experience and best practice with others. Even the strongest schools can go further. We encourage you to lead the way as a system leader - sharing effective practice, championing networks, supporting collaboration, and helping raise standards across the sector.

Your sincerely,
Bridget

Bridget Phillipson

Secretary of State for Education

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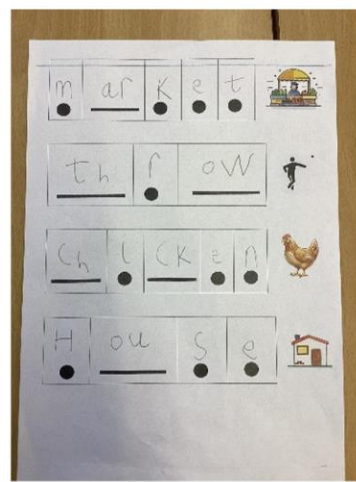
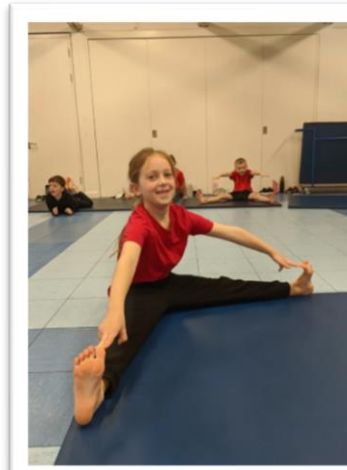
Classroom News



Across the Playground

Year 1

Year 1 have made a fantastic start to the term since returning to school after the Christmas break. In **English**, we have been writing words and simple sentences based on the traditional tale *Jack and the Beanstalk*, with a strong focus on applying the phonics sounds we already know in our **writing**. In PE, we have been developing our sending and receiving skills by practising how to throw and roll a ball with control, as well as enjoying **gymnastics** activities where we explored using different body parts and levels to travel in a variety of ways.



Year 2

This term, the children have jumped back into school with fantastic enthusiasm! In the classroom, we've been inspired by our text *The Night Gardener*, using it to help us **write** clear and **imaginative** outcomes. We started off by creating our own mini owl topiary and now we're looking forward to publishing our own set of instructions. In PE, we've been building on our **gymnastics** skills - creating sequences with different shapes whilst holding a strong, stable balance. Year 2 are working brilliantly - keep it up!

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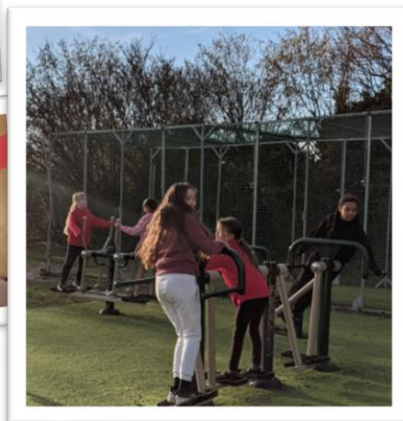
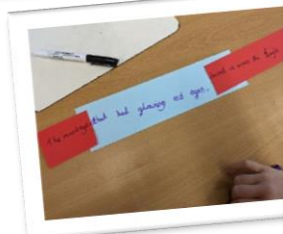
Classroom News



Across the Playground

Year 4

Year 4 have come back with a lot of energy for a brand-new term, and it has been wonderful to see them channelling this into their learning! In **PE**, we have been expanding on our knowledge of **gymnastics** from Autumn 1 and started to create sequences including, jumps, rotations, rolls and balances. In our outdoor unit, we have started to explore the rules of dodgeball and are very excited to play a real game! In class, we have been inspired by our text driver *The Land of Roar* and we have created our very own **fantasy worlds**!



Year 5

Year 5 have had an incredible start to the new term. In **English**, we have been inspired by the video *The Flight*, to write our own recounts from the perspective of the boy from the film clip. In doing so, we have concentrated on sentence structure, relative clauses and punctuation for parenthesis. We have started to explore our new **Geography** unit on Volcanoes and Earthquakes. In P.E, we have been developing our fitness and have thoroughly enjoyed a round robin of fitness activities: gym equipment, skipping, sprinting, beating the ball, throwing and catching.

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The Reading Corner



Reference Libraries

Did you know? At both the Infant and Junior School we have reference libraries for children to explore during their weekly library sessions. The reference libraries contain books that our staff use to compliment the curriculum, ensuring that rich reading experiences take place no matter what the subject.

The children are taught to use the reference libraries during their library sessions – a skill which will serve them well in their future as life long library users!



Spotlight Author

Lynley Dodd

Lynley Dodd is an author from New Zealand. She started out teaching art and then went onto writing and illustrating her own books. Lynley's most famous books are probably the **Hairy Maclary** series. These follow the adventures of a small, scruffy dog (Hairy Maclary) and his friends.



National Year of
Reading 2026

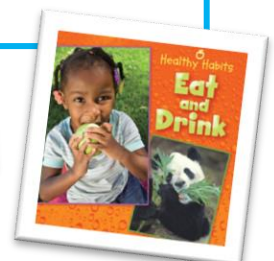
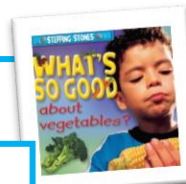
The Department for Education have declared this year, The National Year of Reading. Click the link below for some fantastic ideas on how you can help develop a love of reading at home.

<https://goallin.org.uk/get-involved/families/>

Focus Bookshelves

Healthy Eating

We are looking at how we can all eat more healthily, especially after the Christmas holidays... There are some wonderful books in both libraries to support learning about what is healthy, what is not and how to eat balanced meals. Why not give **Healthy Habits: Eat and Drink** a go? This explores developing healthy habits, as does **What's So Good About Vegetables?**



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Governor Update

Hello, my name is Tony, and I have had the privilege of serving on the Governing Board for just over a year.

Alongside my governor role, for the past five years, I have been involved with the school as a Reading Ambassador, supporting children in Year R, Year 1 and across the Junior School. This role has been deeply rewarding. Each week, I witness pupils grow in confidence as they progress from early phonics to reading full sentences and, ultimately, whole books. Observing this development is consistently one of the most uplifting parts of my week. It is remarkable to see the pride children feel as the words begin to make sense and their reading becomes fluent.

The staff and leadership team at Barksbury Federation do an exceptional job.

Every child is given the time, care and individual attention they need to achieve their reading goals. No pupil is rushed, and no pupil is left behind. The commitment of the staff to ensuring each child succeeds and that their achievements are recognised and celebrated, is truly inspiring. Their dedication, expertise and warmth make a profound difference, and it is a privilege to see their work first-hand.

The two hours I spend in school each week remain the highlight of my week!

The children are consistently enthusiastic, inquisitive and eager to learn. They ask thoughtful questions, approach each task with determination, and bring a sense of joy to every session.

To play even a small part in their reading journey is immensely fulfilling.

I would strongly encourage anyone who feels they could offer an hour or two of their time to consider becoming a reading ambassador. It is a highly rewarding experience, and the school would be delighted to hear from you.

Tony Bolton



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ESafety



How to set up Parental Controls

What are Parental Controls?

Parental controls are settings that put parents in control of what a child can see/access on a device. They allow you to block and filter upsetting or inappropriate content. They work across your WIFI, phone network, individual apps and devices.

Parental controls combined with privacy settings and talking to your child about being online, help to protect children from inappropriate content, online grooming, cyberbullying and other online issues.

Device Specific Controls

Apple Devices - iPhone, iPad, Mac

Parental controls are built into each device, allowing parents to manage screen time, restrict access to certain apps, content, and features.



Android Devices

Enable parental controls through Google Family Link, which allows parents to set screen time limits, approve or block apps, and find the device's location.



Microsoft Devices - Windows, Xbox

Microsoft Family provides tools to manage online activity, block websites, and view activity reports.



Platform Specific Controls

Google Play

Enable parental controls to filter content based on type and restrict access to apps, movies, TV shows, and books.



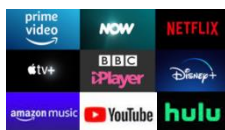
Social Media - Facebook, TikTok, Instagram etc.

Use the platform's built-in tools, like the Instagram Family Centre, to supervise accounts and set time limits.



Entertainment - Netflix, YouTube etc.

Set up parental controls on the platforms' websites or through their apps.



Parent Guides for Parental Controls

Click on the images below for specific parent guides on how to set up parental controls.

Social Media



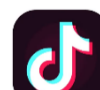
Bluesky



Strava



WhatsApp



TikTok



Snapchat



Instagram



FaceTime



Yubo



Pinterest



Wattpad



Facebook



Facebook Messenger



X (formerly Twitter)

Broadband and Mobile Networks



EE
Broadband



EE
Mobile



Virgin
Media



Tesco
Mobile



TalkTalk



GiffGaff



Sky
Broadband



Sky
Mobile



Plusnet



BT
Mobile



BT
Broadband



Three
Mobile



iD
Mobile



O2
Mobile



Vodafone

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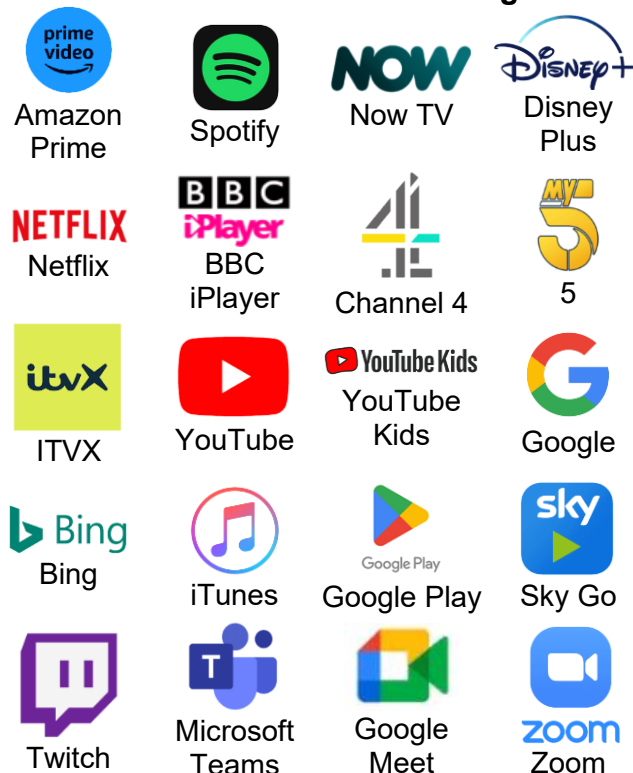
Gaming



Devices



Entertainment and Search Engines



Limits of Parental Controls

Even if you have put things in place on your home broadband and on your child's device, they will not help if your child connects to a different WIFI with no controls in place.



Parental controls are just part of the way you can help keep your child safe online.

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://balksburyfederation.co.uk/esafety/>

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CSL Messages




Reporting your Child's Absence

A reminder that you can now record absences via the Parent Portal and Arbor App. **You will only be able to record same-day absences**, so for any extended or future absences, please contact your child's school admin office and complete a Request for Absence Form.

You will still be able to phone and leave a message on the absence line.

Are you a parent/carer with pre-school or school-age children?
Are you looking for a bit of support from a friendly face?



Parents Empowered by Andover Schools


@ **ACE**
ANDOVER COMMUNITY ENGAGE

Family Support Workers from PEAS will be running a parent drop-in at ACE on Bridge Street, Andover Town Centre, on the following dates:

6 & 27 February, 20 March, 17 April,
01 May, 05 June, 10 July

For anything family related, if we can't help you directly, we can signpost you to someone who can.

No need to book
Just stop by and grab a cuppa.





2026
PARENT & CARER EVENTS

Hampshire Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

A **free** mental health & wellbeing event for all parents and carers who support or work with young people

THURSDAY, 26TH FEBRUARY 2026
QUEEN MARY'S COLLEGE, CLIDDESSEN RD, BASINGSTOKE, HAMPSHIRE RG21 3HF

WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

PACE events consist of two main components:

1. A number of introductory sessions on young people's emotional health and wellbeing.
2. Information stands from local organisations.

Attendees can choose which sessions they would like to attend; select as many or as few as you would like to attend.

NEW SESSIONS:

- Understanding Adolescence & Their Mental Health
- Introduction to Low Mood
- School Avoidance & School Transition
- Eight Skills to Support a Young Person
- Sleep Optimisation
- Understanding Suicide & Suicidal Thinking


To find out more and to book scan this QR code



BOOK YOUR SESSION SPACE AT:

hampshirecamhs.nhs.uk/events

Launching 2026



Parents Empowered by Andover Schools

The PEAS group are Family Support and Pastoral Support Workers working in Andover town schools. Covering local primary, secondary and special education, we're venturing out into the community to offer impartial support, advice and guidance to parents/carers on a number of family related issues.


Keep an eye out for:

'PEAS @ ACE' – our new drop in at Andover Community Engage (ACE), Bridge Street.

Parenting courses including Nurturing Programme & Talking Teens

Themed workshops on family topics that matter to you

Plus much more...



All Andover town schools are part of our PEAS network – you can contact us through any school office

'If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a village to support that child's parent'

- Ann Douglas -

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House Points and Tokens



House Points

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



Tokens - Infants

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



Tokens - Juniors

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



In the Community

IGNITE YOUR POWER CIC

Fit-Families TOGETHER

Weekly FREE family exercise class.
Grow more confident and more active together as a family.

MONDAYS 6:30PM

- £ Free to attend
- Fun
- Book your space via our website
- Endeavour School, Kings Campus, Augusta Park

www.igniteyourpowercic.com/fitfamilies

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Diary Dates

February 2026

Friday 6 th February 2026	Anti Bullying Day
Monday 9 th – Friday 13 th February 2026	Year 6 Residential Trip to Fairthorne Manor
Tuesday 10 th February 2026	Openbox Production: Victorian Childhood – Year 4
Friday 13 th February 2026	End of Block 1 Clubs
Monday 16 th – Friday 20 th February 2026	Half Term
Monday 23 rd February 2026	Start of Block 2 Clubs

March 2026

Thursday 5 th March 2026	World Book Day
Wednesday 18 th March 2026	Year 1 – Army Flying Museum Trip
Monday 16 th March 2026	Parents' Evening (3:30pm – 6:30pm)
Wednesday 18 th March 2026	Parents' Evening (3:30pm – 6:30pm)
Tuesday 24 th March 2026	Year 1 Production (2:00pm)
Wednesday 25 th March 2026	Year 1 Production (2:00pm)
Friday 27 th March 2026	INSET Day
Monday 30 th March – Friday 10 th April 2026	Easter Holidays

April 2026

Wednesday 15 th – Friday 17 th April 2026	Year 4 Residential Trip to Ufton Court
Tuesday 21 st April 2026	Year 2 Titanic Trip

May 2026

Monday 11 th – Friday 15 th May 2026	KS2 SATs Week
Monday 25 th – Friday 29 th May 2026	May Half Term

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June 2026

Thursday 4th June 2026	Openbox Production: Moon Landing – Year 1
Thursday 4th June 2026	Year 3 Butser Farm Trip
Thursday 4th June 2026	Butterflies Parent Information Evening (for new Year R families)
Friday 5th June 2026	Sports Day and Family Picnic
Monday 8th – Friday 12th June 2026	Year 1 Phonics Screening Check Week
Wednesday 10th June 2026	Openbox Production: Dinosaurs – Year R
Thursday 18th June 2026	Butterflies Transition - Session 1
Thursday 18th June 2026	Year 3 Parent Transition Meeting (3:30pm – 4:30pm)
Friday 19th June 2026	Fraser Portraits Class Photos
Thursday 25th June 2026	Butterflies Transition - Session 2

July 2026

Wednesday 1st July 2026	Year 2 Production (2:00pm)
Thursday 2nd July 2026	Year 2 Production (2:00pm)
Friday 3rd July 2026	Year 2 Country Dancing Festival
Monday 6th – Friday 10th July 2026	STEM Week (12:00pm – 4:00pm)
Tuesday 7th July 2026	Change Up Morning and Butterflies Transition - Session 3
Friday 10th July 2026	STEM Festival 2:00pm – 4:30pm
Monday 13th July 2026	Balksbury's Got Talent
Monday 13th July 2026	Year 6 Production 6:00pm
Tuesday 14th July 2026	Year 6 Production 6:00pm

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Tuesday 14th July 2026	Year 2 Fun Day (more information to follow)
Wednesday 15th July 2026	Year 6 Fun Day (more information to follow)
Wednesday 15th July 2026	Year 2 Graduation
Friday 17th July 2026	Disco Fun Day (date amended)
Monday 20th July 2026	Year 6 Graduation 9:15am (date amended)
Monday 20th July 2026	Children's Last Day of Summer Term
Tuesday 21st July 2026	INSET Day
Wednesday 22nd July 2026	INSET Day

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