

Balksbury Federation

Across the Playground

Friday 23rd October

A Message from Mrs Whitlock

What an amazing term it has been!

As we come to the end of what has been a very busy and incredibly rewarding term, I cannot help but reflect with enormous pride on everything our children have achieved. They have made such a wonderful start to the school year, embracing their learning, friendships and new challenges with enthusiasm, determination and, most importantly, joy.

Every day, we see our children demonstrating our values of Perseverance, Respect and Collaboration. Whether they are challenging themselves in the classroom, supporting a friend on the playground or representing our federation on the netball and football pitches, they continue to make us incredibly proud.

The first term of a new school year can bring many changes. New classrooms, new routines, new learning and new expectations all take time to adjust to, yet our children have approached each new experience with such positivity and energy. Their enthusiasm is infectious, and I know I speak for the whole staff team when I say a huge well done to every single one of them!

As the seasons begin to change, the leaves turn golden and the evenings draw in, we look ahead with real excitement to everything the coming term will bring. The colder, darker days of winter provide their own kind of magic in school, with warm classrooms full of curiosity, creativity and learning, and plenty of special moments to look forward to along the way.

For now, I hope all our children and families enjoy a very well-earned half-term break. We cannot wait to welcome everyone back, refreshed and ready for another exciting term together.

Mrs Whitlock



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Open Morning for Year 2 Parents

We will be hosting open mornings for our current Year 2 parents to look around our Junior School. These will be held on **Tuesday 3rd November, Wednesday 4th November and Thursday 5th November**. Please contact the Junior reception to book your space on a tour.

A reminder that if you are a Year 2 parent and you are planning for your child to attend the Junior School in Year 3, you must re-apply for their place.

Applications open on the **1st November 2026,** and close on the **15th January 2027**

https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/admissions



Secondary School Applications

If you have a child in Year 6, applications for **Year 7 2027/2028** are currently open.
A reminder that the national application deadline is on **31st October 2026**.
Please visit Hampshire School Admissions to apply for your child's place.

https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/admissions

Can you Help our PTA?



Our PTA plays a vital role in enriching federated life for our children and building a strong sense of community. Thanks to their fundraising efforts, they have helped provide resources including the long jump area and 3D printers. Any time you can give, no matter how small, will make a real difference to the PTA and children across the federation.

Parents' Evening

We are very pleased to be holding face to face Parents' Evenings on **Monday 9th November** and **Wednesday 11th November**.

Parents' Evening is now bookable via **Arbor**. Bookings are now open and will close at **10:00am on Wedenesday 4th November**.

A reminder that due to Parent's Evening, there will be **no after school clubs** W/C Monday 9th November. Pick Up Club will run as usual.





Dolce Special Lunch

We are excited to share with you Dolce's next themed lunch. After half term, on the **5th November**, Dolce will be cooking up a delicious Fireworks and Bonfire Night Themed Lunch. You can order this via SchoolGrid.



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Christmas is…

Coming to Balksbury!

Christmas Cards

Back by popular demand, children will once again be creating their own beautiful Christmas cards available for purchase. After half term, children will be getting creative and a sneak peek will be made available to families.

For a donation price of only £5, you can purchase a pack of 10 Christmas cards, carefully crafted and hand signed by your child. Each pack comes with 10 envelopes ready to post!



Christmas cards are available to order on Arbor **now until Friday 13th November.**

Christmas Jingle

Preparations are in full swing ready for our Christmas Jingle on **Friday 27th November.** Once again, children will be preparing products to sell at the fayre for families to purchase. Santa Claus will be taking an afternoon off of his Christmas preparations, and will be available to meet in the Hive, as in previous years. More information regarding the Jingle, including how to book to see Santa, will follow after half term.

Christmas Discos

It wouldn't be Christmas without a Disco! The children will have their Discos on **Thursday 17th December** this year. Children are invited to wear their party clothes into school on this day



Dress Down for Jingle

On **Friday 13th November,** we welcome children to come to school in Dress Down and bring a donation for the Christmas Jingle.



This year, we are looking for donations of:



- New or good condition unwanted gifts which would make a nice present for adult family members
- Children's gifts
- Bottles for our tombola
- Chocolate (boxes, bars)



Christmas Jumper and Lunch Day

This year, Dolce will be cooking up a delicious Christmas dinner for our children on **Tuesday 15th December**.

On this day, children are invited to wear a Christmas jumper to school. More information will follow after half-term.

Carols Around the Christmas Tree

The federation is delighted to be have been given the opportunity to take part in 'Carols Around the Christmas Tree' in Andover town centre on Friday **11th December.** Mrs Kew is putting together together a repertoire for singing club and more information will follow after half-term. Exciting times!



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Classroom News

Across the Playground

Year R

Over the last few weeks, our *People Who Help Us* topic has been brought to life through visits from a GP and a vet. The children thoroughly enjoyed hearing about their jobs and learning how they help people and animals stay healthy and safe. They were excited to explore some of the tools and equipment used in these professions and loved asking questions to find out more. It was wonderful to see their curiosity and enthusiasm as they learned about these important roles within our community.

















Year 3

Year 3 have been working incredibly hard, and we are all very proud of the fantastic learning that has been taking place. In Art, we have enjoyed learning about Denzil Forrester, a Grenada-born artist who moved to England at the age of ten. His work is characterised by vibrant, bold colours, inspired by both his Caribbean upbringing and his life in East London. The children explored perspective within his paintings and worked hard to create their own artwork in the style of Denzil Forrester, using perspective, lines and tonal shading to achieve impressive effects. To introduce our new text, *Into the Forest*, the children took part in an exciting scavenger hunt around the Federation, discovering a variety of hidden fairy-tale characters along the way. In Music, the children have enjoyed creating their own class ballad, using the silent film Soar as inspiration for their lyrics. They demonstrated great creativity and teamwork as they worked together to compose meaningful words to accompany the story.

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Classroom News

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Year 6

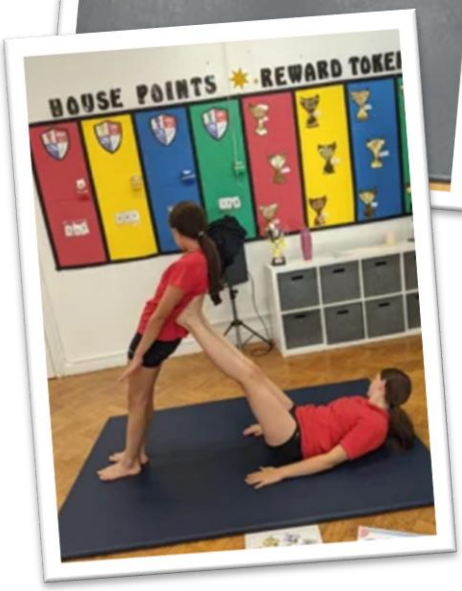
Year 6 have been working hard across the curriculum. In P.E, we have been playing tag rugby, where the children have impressed with their dynamic footwork and collaboration. We have also seen some fantastic gymnastics using balance, control and tension. In Maths, we have explored multiplication challenges and have begun our learning of long division. In History, we have continued to explore what the home front would have been like in WW2 and the impacts the war had on the people of the time. In Science, we have been learning about classifying animals, plants and microorganisms - we even used microscopes to see some real ones!











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The Reading Corner

School Library of the Year Update

Last week, Mrs Davies and Miss Bolton had the wonderful opportunity to speak at a webinar with fellow nominees from the School Library of the Year Award, as well as last years winner and members of the judging panel.

They were asked:

Your nomination makes it clear that pupils are at the heart of every decision you make - from choosing new books and writing reviews to serving as Year 6 librarians. Why is pupil voice so important to you, and how has it shaped the culture of your library?

Mrs Davies and Miss Bolton were very excited to share how the federation ensures children's voices are heard. At Balkbsury, all children are members of our Smart School Council, where each half-term, they are given the opportunity to request new reads. In both our of libraries, we have suggestion boxes, review cards and emoji lolly sticks for children to place in books. We truly believe that the library should be a place for children to fall in love with books, share stories with friends and learn something new.

We know it is not enough to just give the gift of reading, we have to make sure it is an exciting gift to receive!

More information on the award can be found here: https://www.sla.org.uk/Public/News/Articles/2026/2026-SLA-Awards.aspx

Spotlight on… Hannah Gold

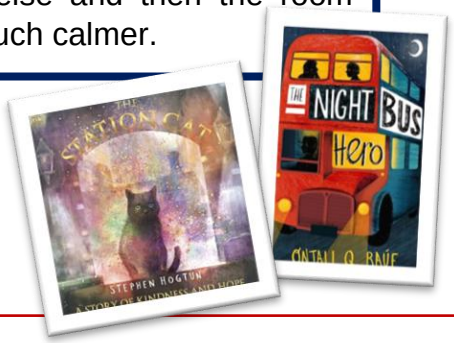


Hannah lives with her kittens, a very cheeky tortoise and her husband. She is a very proud ambassador for the conservation of whales and dolphins. Hannah loves to write about animals and some of her books are The Lone Husky, Turtle Moon and The Last Bear.

Hannah also tries to plant trees each month to help the environment!

Focus Bookshelves Being Kind

Kindness is being aware of people's feelings and needs, it is showing respect, it's being fair. Showing kindness can help people and the school as a whole feel happier and safer. The best thing about kindness is that it can cause a ripple effect. So, if you make sure that someone feels included, they do the same for someone else and then the room feels so much calmer.



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ESafety
YouTube

13+

Fun Fact

YouTube is the world's most popular video-sharing platform and the 2nd most popular website, with over 2 billion monthly users. The only website that gets more visitors is Google.

Did you know?

With over 500 hours of videos uploaded every hour, not all of it will be appropriate for children's eyes.

What are the risks?

Inappropriate content - Many videos are not appropriate for children to watch

Connecting with strangers - Children are at risk of receiving unwanted messages or comments

Challenges - YouTube is full of videos of challenges which can be fun to watch, making the viewer want to try them out. While most of the challenges are safe, others may cause physical or emotional harm

Scammers - Scammers can post links in the comment section, which are phishing attacks designed to collect personal information and often bank details

Live-streaming - As there is no editing or reviewing process with this feature, children can be exposed to abusive or harmful behaviour, inappropriate content or comments live

Influencers - Children can find it difficult to distinguish between a genuine recommendation and something the person has been paid to promote

Misinformation - YouTube has been known to spread misinformation. Children can find it difficult to distinguish between what is true and what is fake



Keep your child safe

Apply restricted mode – prevents YouTube from showing inappropriate material to underage viewers

Turn off Auto-play – prevents YouTube's algorithm automatically recommending something inappropriate

Use YouTube Kids – lets you filter content by ages - 'pre-school' (4 and under); 'younger' (5 to 8); and 'older' (9 to 12)

Create a Google Family Account – allows parents to monitor what their child is uploading, sharing and watching

Check Privacy settings – videos can be uploaded as 'private' or 'unlisted'. Comments on videos can also be disabled

Limit spending – although YouTube is free, it does offer in-app purchases. Do not let your child run up an unexpected bill

Block, report and flag – report inappropriate content to the YouTube moderation team



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 covering a wide range of themes on our website https://balksburyfederation.co.uk/esafety/

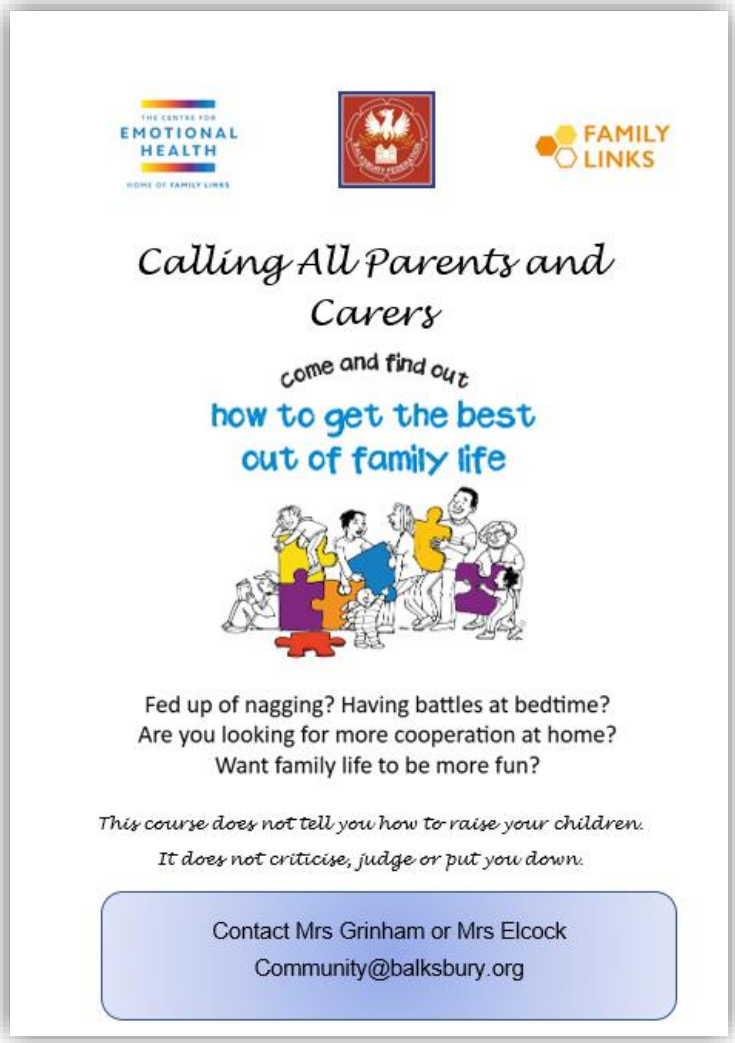
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CSL Messages

Nurture Programme







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CSL Messages

Federated Parent Coffee, Cake and Chat

What is it?

Coffee, cake and chat is an informal morning for parents and carers across the Federation to come together.



Why?

It is an opportunity to get to know other parents/carers that you may not usually speak to. You may be surprised at how many families are dealing with similar issues and it's sometimes comforting to be able to find out that 'you're not the only one'.



Mrs Grinham and Mrs Elcock are also able to advise on many topics, such as, emotional and behaviour support, signposting to different agencies, financial support, school attendance or just have a chat about general day to day struggles.

There doesn't even have to be a reason for coming along, just a chance to have a bit of a catch up and it is also a great opportunity to come and sample some of Mrs Grinham's baking! She makes amazing cakes!



What other parents say

"I really enjoy just popping in for a cuppa and a catch up, there is no pressure"

"What a lovely chance to meet other parents, it was nice to just take some time to sit and chat!

Where?

Head over to the ***Junior School reception*** and you will see signs directing you. The Junior School reception is at the bottom of the long drive by the pond and tree.

Our next Coffee, Cake and Chat will be:

Thursday 12th November 2026

at 8:45am-10:15am



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House Points and Tokens

House Points

We have a tie! The Houses with the most points across the Federation to date are: Danebury and Sidbury.







Tokens - Infants

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

Tokens - Juniors

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



PTA Message









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Achievements from Outside of School

With the rugby season having a delayed start this year due to the heatwaves baking the ground, these three Year 6 students were itching to get back to the game they love.
Owen, Tommy, and Thomas took part in the annual Alton Rugby festival at the beginning of October, representing Andover Rugby Clubs U11s.
Now in their sixth season playing together, these three boys are great team mates and enjoy all of the new elements each age bracket introduces to the game they love. Well done boys, we look forward to hearing all about your future achievements.



In the Community





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Diary Dates

November 2026

Tuesday 3rd November 2026	Openbox – Year 5 Egyptians
Tuesday 3rd November 2026	PTA Annual General Meeting 3:30pm
Tuesday 3rd November 2026	Tour for Year 3 2027-2028 9:15-10:00am
Wednesday 4th November 2026	Tour for Year 3 2027-2028 9:15-10:00am
Wednesday 4th November 2026	Tour for Year 3 2027-2028 11:00-11:45am
Thursday 5th November 2026	Tour for Year 3 2027-2028 9:15-10:15am
Thursday 5th November 2026	Fraser Portraits Individual Photos
Wednesday 9th November 2026	Year R, Height, Weight & Vision Screening
Monday 9th November – Friday 13th November 2026	No After School Clubs (Pick Club will run as normal)
Monday 9th November 2026	Parents' Evening 3:30-6:30pm
Wednesday 11th November 2026	Parents' Evening 3:30-6:30pm
Thursday 12th November 2026	Openbox – Year 3 Early Man
Thursday 12th November 2026	Year 5 Winchester Science Museum Trip
Friday 13th November 2026	Jingle Dress Down Day
Tuesday 17th November 2026	Flu Immunisation
Friday 20th November 2026	Year 1 Tree Planting
Monday 23rd November 2026	Year 4 Tree Planting
Friday 27th November 2026	The Christmas Jingle (2pm for families, 3pm - 4:30pm for children)

December 2026

Wednesday 9th December 2026	Year R Nativity
Thursday 10th December 2026	Year R Nativity
Tuesday 15th December 2026	Christmas Jumper & Lunch Day
Wednesday 16th December 2026	Openbox Pantomime
Thursday 17th December 2026	Christmas Disco Day
Friday 18th December 2026	Children's Last Day of School for Christmas

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January 2027	
Monday 4th January 2027	Children Back to School
February 2027	
Friday 5th February 2027	Anti-Bullying Day
Monday 8th February – Friday 12th February 2027	Year 6 Fairthorne Manor Residential Trip
Monday 15th February – Friday 19th February 2027	Half Term
Monday 22nd February 2027	INSET Day
March 2027	
Wednesday 10th March 2027	Year 1 Army Flying Museum Trip
Date TBC	Year 1 Production 1:30pm to 3:00pm
Date TBC	Year 1 Production 1:30pm to 3:00pm
Thursday 25th March 2027	Children's Last Day before Easter break
April 2027	
Monday 12th April 2027	Children Back to School
Tuesday 20th April 2027	Year 2 Titanic Trip
Friday 30th April 2027	INSET Day
May 2027	
Monday 10th – 14th May 2027	KS2 SATs Week
June 2027	
Monday 1st June – Friday 7th June 2027	Half Term
Monday 7th June – Friday 18th June 2027	Year 4 Multiplication Test
Monday 7th June 2027	Openbox – Year R: Pirates
Tuesday 8th June 2027	Openbox – Year 1: Moon Landing
Thursday 10th June 2027	Fraser Portraits Class Photos
Thursday 10th June 2027	New Year 3 Parent Transition Meeting
Monday 14th June 2027	Phonics Screening Check Week
Friday 18th June 2027	Sports Day and Family Picnic
Tuesday 29th June 2027	Year 5 John Hanson Taster Morning

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July2027	
Monday 5th July – Friday 9th July 2027	Arts Week
Friday 9th July 2027	Music and Arts Festival 2:00pm - 4:00pm
Monday 12th July 2027	Balksbury's Got Talent Final (In school event)
Tuesday 13th July 2027	Year 2 Fun Day
Wednesday 14th July 2027	Year 2 Graduation
Thursday 15th July 2027	Year 6 Fun Day
Friday 16th July 2027	Disco Day
Monday 19th July 2027	Year 6 Graduation 9:15am – 10:00am
Monday 19th July 2027	Children's Last Day of School
Tuesday 20th July 2027	INSET Day
Wednesday 21st July 2027	INSET Day

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