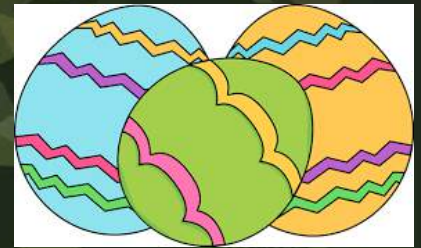




Dashwood Banbury Academy
an Aspirations Academy

Dashwood News

Friday 27th March 2026



Aspirations Academies Trust
In association with Quaglia Institute

A note from the Principal...

It has been a very short term but a very busy one!

It's been a wonderfully busy and exciting time at school, with so many memorable experiences for our children. Highlights have included Bedtime Stories, Zoolab, a visit to Science Oxford, farm trips, and of course our fantastic celebration of books on World Book Day. Just a reminder that we regularly share updates and photos from our visits on our Facebook page, so do take a look to keep up with all the amazing things happening at school.

We've also been delighted to build new connections this term, particularly with the sixth form students from Wykham Park Academy. They have been fantastic in supporting some of our Year 6 readers, and we also enjoyed a very successful chess session together. At Dashwood, we are always striving to make our school the very best it can be, and we are constantly looking for new and enriching experiences for our children to take part in.

Looking ahead, Term 5 is already shaping up to be just as busy and exciting, with a KS1 farm trip, a Year 6 trip to see *Wicked*, a Year 3 canal walk, and no doubt plenty more to come!

I would like to wish all our families a joyful and refreshing Easter break.

This time of year brings a wonderful sense of new beginnings, with longer days, brighter skies, and signs of spring all around us. We hope the holiday offers everyone a chance to relax, recharge, and enjoy special moments with family and friends—whether that's getting outdoors, sharing a meal, or simply taking a well-earned rest.

We look forward to welcoming everyone back, refreshed and ready for the exciting term ahead.

Warmest wishes,

Mrs Gordon-Weeks



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Staffing Update

Firstly, we would like to wish Mrs Bunn and her family the best of luck for the arrival of her new baby after Easter. We hope you have some time to put your feet up before the fun begins! We are delighted to welcome Mrs. Samantha Pitchfork to the Dashwood teaching staff to replace Mrs. Bunn whilst she is off.

As we welcome new people to the team, I am sorry to say there are times where we have to say goodbye. Miss Clemons will be leaving us at the end of April to embark on the next step in her career. She has taken a new teaching position at a school closer to her home. We would like to thank Miss Clemons for all of her dedication and commitment to Dashwood; she is a fantastic teacher who has developed our music curriculum over the year. Her class will miss her very much as will we all. In order to be as consistent as possible at this time of the year, I am glad to inform you that Miss Laura French will be teaching Redwood Class for the remainder of the year. Laura is a familiar face to all of our families so will help the transition.



Dashwood Action Committee Meeting and Parents evening feedback

Thank you to parents, carers and our teachers for such positive and collaborative parents' evening this week. It is always such a pleasure to have parents in, work with you and to share the progress that your child is making. Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment.

During parents' evenings, we conducted a survey to gather parent voice about **what was going well** and **ideas for any ways we could improve**. It is always great to gather parent/carers opinions and ideas because it helps us to better understand how we can shape Dashwood even further. One parent had a great idea for the Dashwood News to make it more succinct by focusing on three priorities each issue that we can all be working on together to make Dashwood an even better place! See our three priorities over the next three slides.



Firstly, we are delighted to share very positive feedback from our parent community. Families describe Dashwood as a **caring, inclusive, and welcoming school**, where children feel happy, supported, and motivated to learn.

Parents value our **dedicated and approachable staff**, strong communication, and the sense of community across the school. The focus on **wellbeing, behaviour, and high-quality teaching** is widely praised, alongside enriching opportunities such as trips, clubs, and a broad curriculum.

Families also appreciate the support provided beyond the classroom, including breakfast and afterschool provision, and the care given to each child as an individual.

Parents Evening March 2026



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Priority 1: Mobile Phone Policy

We have updated our mobile phone guidance in school. **From Term 5**, we ask you **not to use your phone on school site** for the following reasons:

- 1) All attention needs to be on the children. We have had incidents where children have gone missing at collection time.
- 2) For **GDPR (Data protection)** - when attending school events, phones can be used as it is in a controlled environment and a member of staff will remind parents and carers not to share photos online of any other children. However, when in an uncontrolled environment re: drop off and collection, safeguarding measures are more difficult to manage.

We will kindly ask you to put your phone away whilst on site.



Priority 2: Arbor and communication

Your parent voice told us about some improvements needed to the Arbor app (navigation, message titles, reliability)

- School emails sometimes going to junk folders
- Titles in the Arbor so messages can be re-traced
- More communication with parents with incident follow-ups
- Improved information sharing between office staff and teachers

Thank you for this feedback, we are looking into this with Arbor.



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Priority 3: Homework feedback

This term we will be updating our homework policy. Some excellent parent feedback has already helped us start the process. Please complete this short Google form so we can help this to rewrite our policy.

Link: <https://forms.gle/bLv8EgiFznU1UC2q9>

Please have your say as we are wanting to trial some new approaches in Term 6



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Summer Uniform is back!

Summer Dresses are back for Term 5 and 6

Pupils may wear a green gingham dress with which a tie is not needed. **White socks are to be worn with the summer dresses.**

<https://dashwood.academies.aspirationsacademies.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2025/10/Uniform-letter-full-2025.2026-to-parents.pdf>



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What have our



pupils been



learning this



term?



Nursery Farm Trip

Plum Class had a memorable visit to Warriner Farm. The journey by coach was full of excitement, with the children enjoying spotting familiar landmarks around Banbury—especially the train station!

At the farm, they met and feed a variety of animals, with the goats being a firm favourite. The children were also delighted to see lambs just a few days old.



Cherry Nursery

The nursery children have been enjoying lots of time outdoors in the sunshine! They've had great fun playing in the sandpit, building and exploring together, as well as practising their ball skills with plenty of energy and enthusiasm. They are also improving their skills on the balance bikes and gaining confidence on the climbing equipment. It's been wonderful to see their coordination, confidence, and teamwork growing.



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Plum Nursery

Plum Class have thoroughly enjoyed learning all about the farm this term. The children have been busy using small world animals to create and recreate their own imaginative farms, showing great creativity in their play.

They have also been designing and building farm animal homes using junk modelling, developing both their creativity and problem-solving skills. In maths, they have been securing our understanding of shape by matching and describing different shapes with increasing confidence.



Reception

Reception pupils have been exploring the changing seasons by spotting the signs of spring, including new plant growth and lighter, warmer days. Alongside this, they have been learning about special celebrations within our community, such as Easter and Eid. As part of developing knowledge and understanding of the world, pupils have been studying changing states of matter and had fun exploring how solid chocolate can be melted into a liquid, then transformed back into a solid by cooling it down.



Easter Hat Parades

Plum nursery and reception classes took part in their Easter Hat Parades this week, and also treated us to some spring-themed songs.

We were amazed by the imaginative and creative hat designs and would like to thank parents and carers for their support with making these.

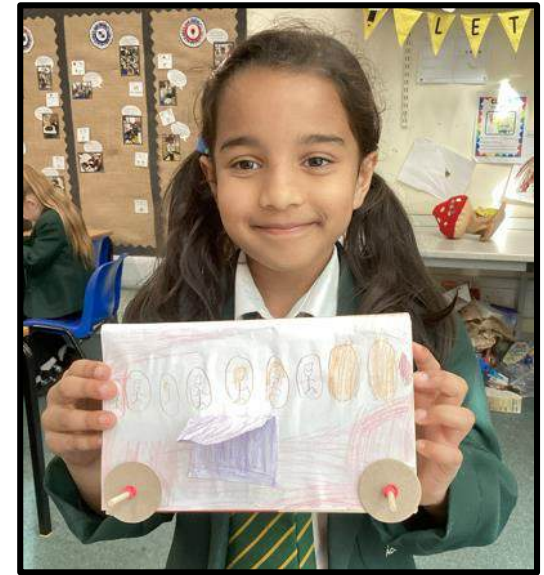


Year 1

Year 1 have fully put their creativity, critical thinking and character to the test these last few weeks.

This term we have looked at a variety of toys, what they are made of and how they move. We then discussed as a class that we were going to make a moving vehicle. We spent time thinking about different types of vehicles and then which one we wanted to design. The children then designed their own vehicles, from aeroplanes to ice cream trucks. The children had to show great resilience and determination when they were building their cars to thread through the axles and twist the elastic bands to hold their wheels in place.

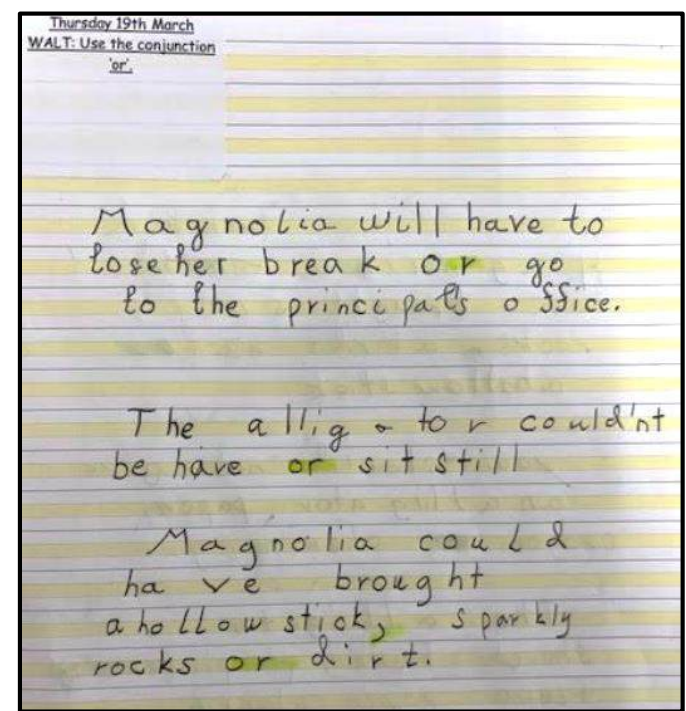
The end products of these vehicles were phenomenal and the children should be very proud of what they have achieved.



Year 2

Year 2 have loved our new story 'If you ever want to bring an alligator to school, don't!' and have been doing some excellent writing using a range of skills to use the characters and plot to write more complex sentences including commas for lists and a range of conjunctions.

Year 2 have also enjoyed learning to create songs and rhythmic patterns using Chrome Music Lab. They have been learning more about patterns and pulse to keep a steady tempo.



Year 3

Over the past couple of weeks, Year 3 have continued to explore fractions in Maths, developing their understanding and confidence when working with different parts of a whole. In English, we focused on using fronted adverbials to make our writing more exciting and detailed and the children used these skills to write their own adventure stories.

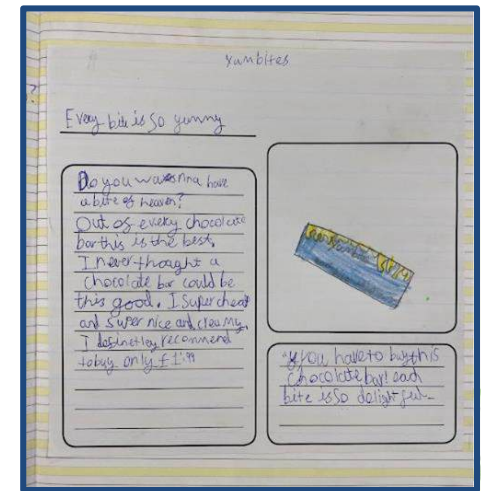
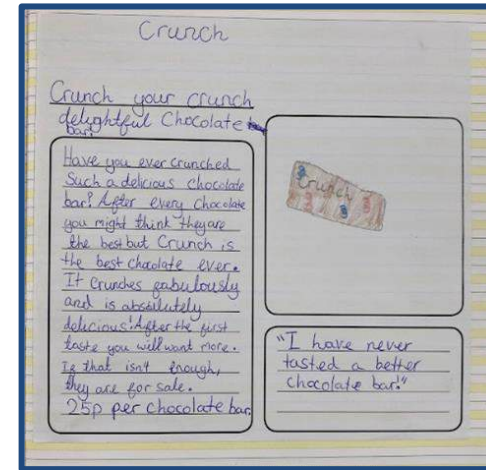
In Science, we observed the growth of individual cress plants and used techniques of fair testing to investigate how they develop in the absence of one of the essential components for growth. Our topic on Ancient Egypt has continued to inspire us, and we created Egyptian “medicine” (a colour-changing magic potion- as mysterious and fascinating as Egypt’s pyramids) with its packaging. Additionally, Mrs Zohaib and Mr Bennett enjoyed sharing the children's progress in our recent parents' evening.

We would like to wish all of our Year 3 families a very happy Easter and a restful break!



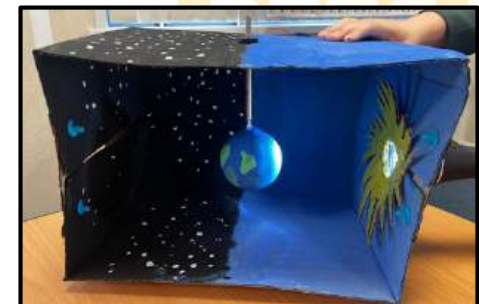
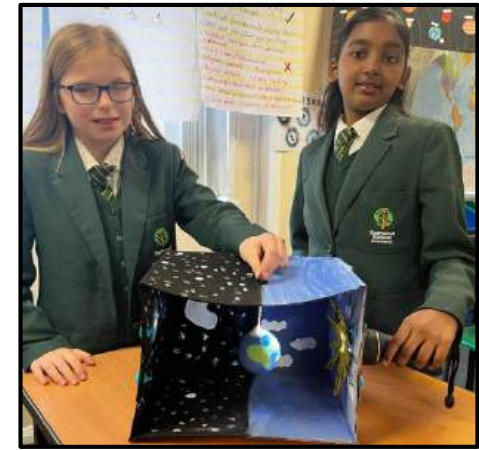
Year 4

What an amazing end to the term we have had! After conducting market research at the beginning of the term, we had the opportunity to make our own chocolate bars with a range of toppings. The toppings included: marshmallows, popping candy, sprinkles and caramel. We created wrappers for our bars which included catchy slogans, ingredients and our chocolate bar names. As it is a new product, we created persuasive adverts, both written and audio, for our chocolate bars to convince our target audience to buy them. It has definitely been one of our favourite topics so far this year!



Year 5

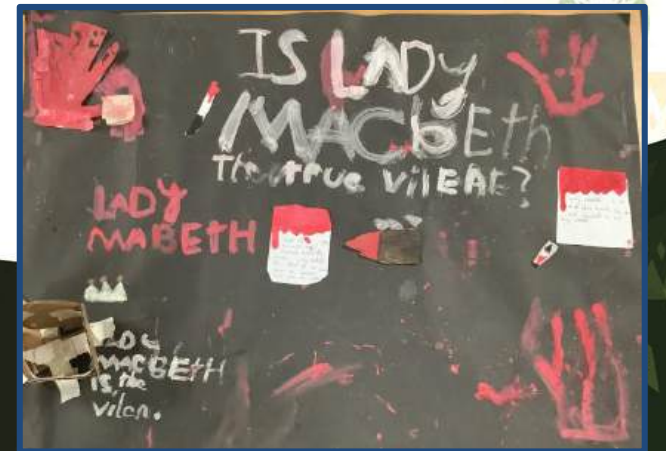
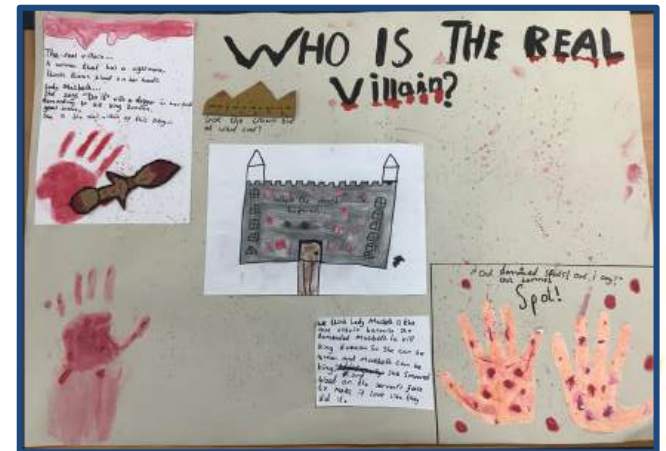
Year 5 have had fun completing their *Earth and Space* unit of learning. Collaboratively, the children created a model which demonstrated why day and night occur (complete with a typed up explanation). In Literacy, the children have learned about how theories of the Solar System have changed over time from Ptolemy's *Geocentric* theory to the *Heliocentric* model supported by Copernicus, Galileo and Newton. We were delighted with the written explanations which really demonstrated their scientific knowledge.



Year 6

Year 6 have had a great end to Term 4 and have been working hard to get everything completed before the Easter break. In literacy, they have been learning about about Shakespeare and Macbeth. They have enjoyed getting into character with a bit of acting, completing some descriptive writing and producing a creative final project answering the question 'who was the real villain?'

In maths they have been covering position and direction, converting measurements and have started looking at shape including angles. They have really enjoyed our mould experiment and creating presentations of this for the school science fair. It was great to see their understanding of microorganisms develop including how it links to modern life and advances in medicine.



Laurel Class

Laurel Class went on an exciting trip to The Light cinema this week to watch *Pets on a Train*. We all had a fantastic time. We have also been preparing for our Laurel Class party as we plan to celebrate Laurel Class turning 1! We have made invitations, party hats and are planning to make some fairy cakes!



The Treehouse

Warriner Farm Visit

The Treehouse pupils had a wonderful time visiting the Warriner Farm for their class trip. The pupils enjoyed travelling to the farm on the Dashwood school bus and spotting different vehicles on their journey.

At the farm the pupils were able to get up close and personal to goats, pigs, sheep, donkeys and cows. The highlight of the visit was being able to cuddle the new lambs and feeding the goats. We were so proud of how brave the pupils were!





Trips and Enrichment Experiences



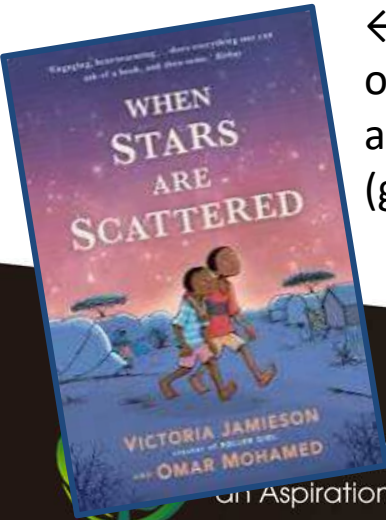
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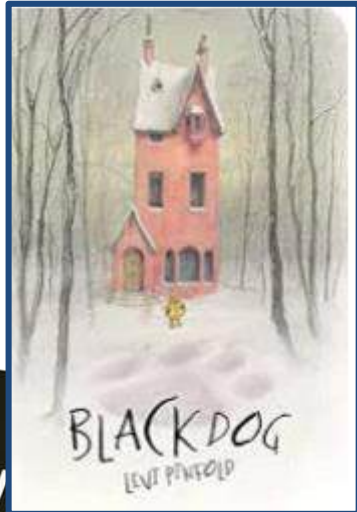
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Reading for Pleasure

We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of the book order we put in after our generous World Book Day donations. We have ordered a wide range of books which reflect the 'windows and mirrors' theme of reading about people like ourselves, as well as learning about the lives of other people whose lives may be very different from our own. The main themes are - Understanding emotions, identity, and real-life challenges while building empathy, courage, and self-belief. Graphic novels have become very popular and an up and coming genre is 'verse novels' where short stories are told in poetic form. Over the Easter holiday, you could look into reading some poetry whilst we wait to restock The Grove Library with exciting new titles. Here's just a few to look out for next time you visit...



← A true story of growing up in a refugee camp (graphic novel)



← An accessible story of fear and courage



→ Mindful and uplifting poems for children

Year 5 Science Trip

Some of our Year 5 pupils had an exciting opportunity to visit the Oxford Science Centre to take part in a special event organised by Ecocode, accompanied by Mrs Zohaib and Ms Galloway. During the visit, pupils explored how science and technology work together to help us better understand the world around us.



Through engaging demonstrations and hands-on activities, the children discovered how microbits can be used to investigate fascinating phenomena such as cosmic rays, the remarkable strength of spider silk, and many other scientific mysteries. It was a truly informative and inspiring experience that sparked curiosity and encouraged pupils to think like young scientists.



Rock Steady Rock!

The Rock Steady concert was a fantastic showcase of the children's hard work, enthusiasm, and growing musical talent. Each group performed with confidence and energy, demonstrating impressive progress on their instruments. From steady drumming and strong guitar rhythms to confident keyboard playing and expressive singing, the students showed great teamwork and a real sense of musical understanding.



Dashwood Science Fair

Our Science Fair was a fantastic celebration of curiosity, creativity, and discovery. Students from all year groups proudly showcased their learning through a wide range of amazing investigations and interactive experiments. From hands-on demonstrations to thought-provoking displays, each project reflected the hard work, enthusiasm and scientific thinking developed throughout the term. Visitors were able to explore, question and engage with the experiments, making it an exciting and inspiring experience for everyone involved!

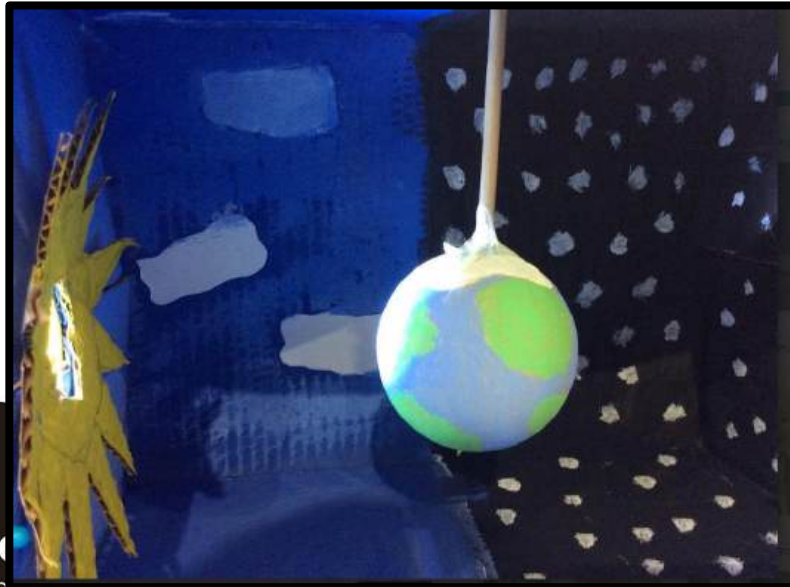


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Dashwood Science Fair



Mould Investigation

Would you grow everywhere!

BUT WHERE IS BEST FOR IT TO GROW ??????????

Warm, Wet + Dark conditions.

BY:
Ella & Ayda

KS1 Bedtime Stories

Our KS1 children had a wonderful time at our special Bedtime Stories event! They were invited back to school in their pyjamas and enjoyed a range of fun, book-themed activities based on *The Highway Rat*.

The children took part in yoga, story sequencing, face painting, decorating cakes from the "cake shop," and even watched a mini movie of the story. There were smiles all around, and lots of laughter too!

It was a fantastic way to bring stories to life and share the joy of reading together. Thank you for your continued support—we hope the children enjoyed it as much as we did!



Eco Warrior Rewilding the Pond

Our energetic and eager Eco Warriors have made a fantastic start on rewilding the pond, planting a range of plants - including two apple trees - to attract buzzing bees and beautiful butterflies.

Nature is already responding, with four frogs and a newt spotted! We can't wait to see the area bloom into a colourful habitat for wildlife.



Keep watching as it continues to grow!



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Competition - Design the Pond Area



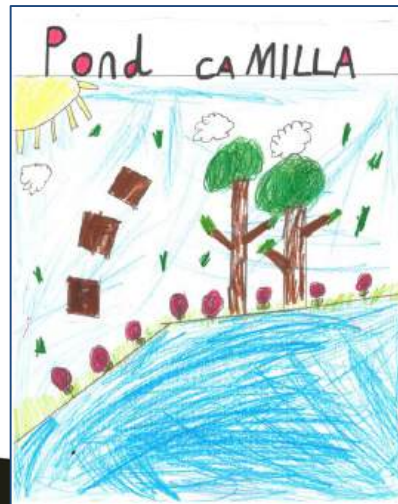
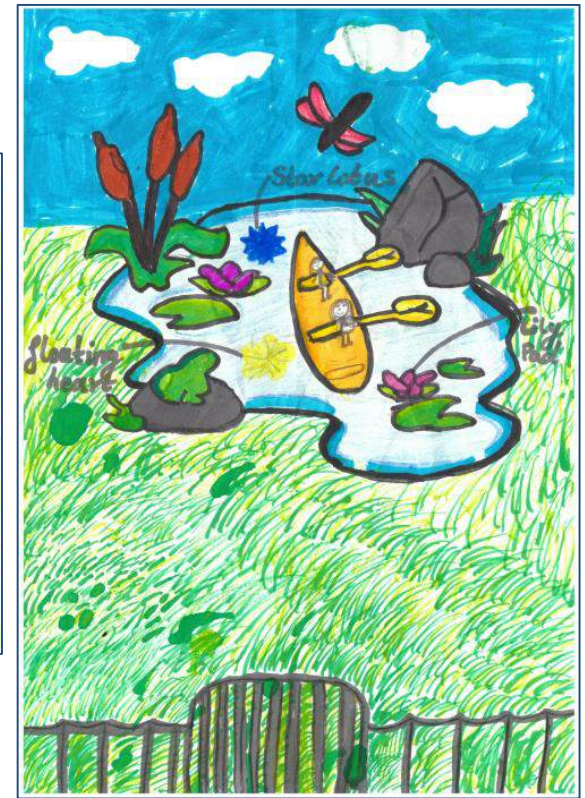
We invited Years 1-6 to help us design our pond area and inspire us and ensure that we planted the best and most enticing plants to help our habitat thrive for birds, bees and butterflies.



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Our wonderful entries!



Academy





Up and coming events and dates for your diary



<https://dashwood.academies.aspirationsacademies.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2026/03/Term-5-dates-2026.pdf>



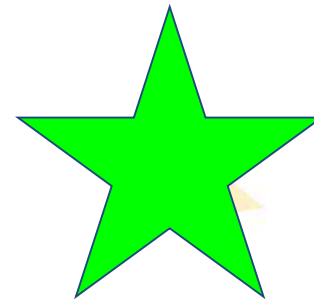
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Parent and Carer Support Section



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FREE

Easter holiday
club
opportunities
with a free
lunch!



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BANBURY RUFC & THOMAS FRANKS

 | **COMMUNITY** 

BANBURY RUFC
FREE COMMUNITY RUGBY SESSIONS
DROP-IN SKILLS SESSION

SESSIONS
30TH MARCH
THE HILL COMMUNITY CENTRE, OX16 0JJ
11:00AM-12:00PM

10TH APRIL
GRIMSBURY COMMUNITY CENTRE, OX16 3WT
11:00AM-12:00PM

FREE PACKED LUNCH
FROZEN MEALS AVAILABLE
RUGBY GAMES AND SKILLS

SUPPORTED BY THOMAS FRANKS

30TH MARCH & 10TH APRIL 2026

THE HILL COMMUNITY CENTRE, OX16 0JJ GRIMSBURY COMMUNITY CENTRE, OX16 3WT



Explorers



Get active this Easter with Let's Go Outdoors!

A collection of free, simple outdoor activities inspired by canals and nature, perfect for primary-aged children and their families during the Easter holidays.

Activities will help families reconnect in the great outdoors, learn simple mindfulness skills and spend quality time together.

Download the activities for free at: canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers/families/lets-go-outdoors



canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers
Charity no. 1146792



Explorers

Learn dragonfly breathing to help calm your mind, or go on a scavenger hunt to find natural treasures!



Find a wellbeing trail near you

Download a trail near you, or do the activities anywhere!

canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers/families/lets-go-outdoors

Want to take this further in school?

Our Explorers learning programme, features:
Free curriculum-linked resources
Bookable school visits
Hands-on workshops connected to canals and nature



Find out more
Email us at: explorers@canalrivertrust.org.uk
canalrivertrust.org.uk/explorers



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Community Music Opportunities in the Easter Holidays



Oxford Folk Festival – Saturday 11th April

During the Easter holidays, our resident folk musicians, Katie Harris and Jon Fletcher, will be busy leading two FREE workshops for children and families. The workshops will take place at Oxford Westgate Library as part of the Oxford Folk Festival. More information below including booking links (the workshops are free but spaces must be booked in advance).

11:00 – 11:45am – [Children and Families Folk Workshop](#)

Explore and play some traditional folk instruments and enjoy a good singalong! Primary school age pupils. Children must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

12:00 – 12:45pm – [Youth Folk Group demonstration and try-out](#)

Watch some of our folk group members perform songs and then you'll have a chance to join in. Children in school years 6-11. A parent/guardian must sign their child in and then remain in the library throughout the session.



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Community Music Opportunities for those who play an instrument.

OXFORDSHIRE INTERMEDIATE WIND ORCHESTRA EXPERIENCE

A great opportunity for Woodwind, Brass and Percussion pupils of approximately Grade 2 - 5 standard to experience playing in a large scale wind orchestra.

 **Saturday 16 May**
14.00 - 17.00

 **Centre for Music**
Bayards Hill School,
OX3 9FF

 **£30 per pupil**

 **Fun and exciting**
Learn new pieces and make new friends of a similar age and ability.

 **Expert teachers**
You'll work with experienced teachers from the Music Service.



For more information, please email mark.probert@oxfordshire.gov.uk
[Sign up here](#) or using the QR code.



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Support videos from
the Child and
Adolescent Mental
Health Service.

What is Emotionally
Based School
Avoidance



Risk factors for
Emotionally Based
School Avoidance



Tips for Emotionally
Based School
Avoidance



Thriving with
ADHD in school



ADHD
and sleep



Reframing
ADHD



Girls and ADHD



ADHD – order out of
chaos



Growing older and
changing ADHD
symptoms



The importance of
sleep



Tips to support
sleep optimisation

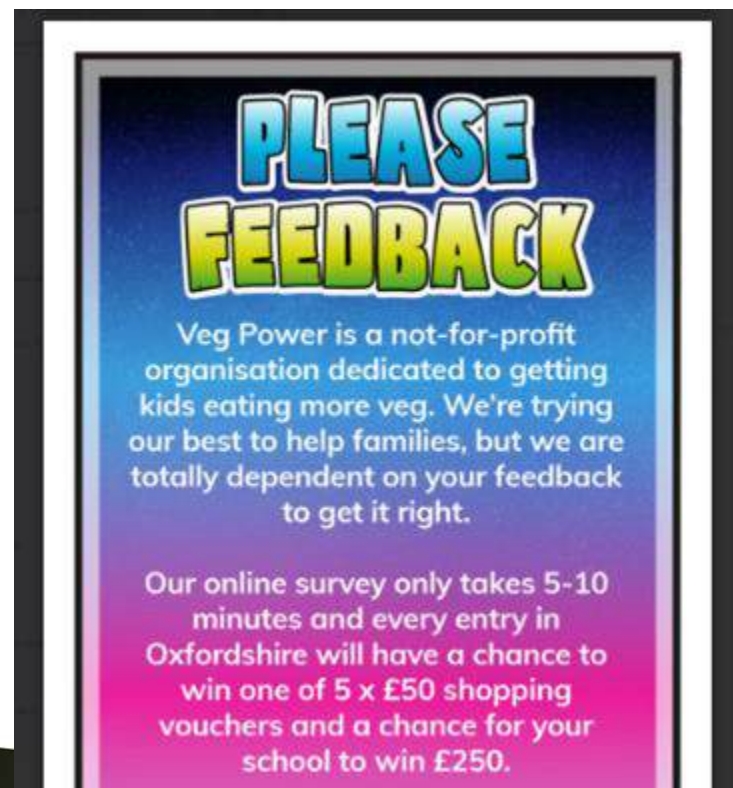


To watch the
videos, scan these
QR codes





Please complete the survey below:
<https://eatthemtodefeatthem.com/oxfordshire-survey/>



Safeguarding - What to do if you have a concern about a child

If you have a concern about any child over the holidays you can, make a referral as a member of the public. For more information on how to do this follow:

[Report child abuse | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

[Report abuse to the NSPCC](#)

If a child is at immediate risk of harm, call 999.



2025 - 2026 Term Dates

Term 5 2026: Monday 13th April - Thursday 21st May

Bank Holiday: Monday 4th May - School Closed

INSET Day: Friday 22nd May - School closed for pupils

Term 6 2026: Monday 1st June - Friday 17th July

INSET Day: Friday 26th June - School closed for pupils

INSET Day: Monday 20th July - School closed for pupils

Last day of term - Friday 17th July - school will close
1.30 pm on this day.

There will be no After School Club



Term dates for 2026-2027

Term 1 2026: Thursday 3rd September - Friday 23rd October

INSET DAYS: Tuesday 1st and Wednesday 2nd September - School closed for pupils

INSET DAY: Friday 16th October

Term 2 2026: Monday 2nd November - Friday 18th December

INSET DAYS: Friday 27th and Monday 30th November - School closed for pupils

Last day - Friday 18th December - school closes at 1.30 pm

Term 3 2027: Tuesday 5th January 2027 - Friday 12th February

INSET DAY: Monday 4th January - School closed for pupils

Term 4 2027: Monday 22nd February - Thursday 25th March

Term 5 2027: Monday 12th April to Thursday 27th May

Bank Holiday: Monday 3rd May - School Closed

INSET DAY: Friday 28th May - school closed for pupils

Term 6 2027: Monday 7th June - Wednesday 21st July

Last day of term - Wednesday 21st July - school closes at 1.30 pm



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