



Dashwood Banbury Academy
an Aspirations Academy

Dashwood News

Tuesday 5th May 2026



Aspirations Academies Trust
in association with Quaglia Institute

A note from the Principal...

I hope you have all enjoyed the May Bank Holiday weekend. The sun is trying so hard to come out- we just want it to stay out! The pupils are enjoying being outside on the field and engaging with all of the outside equipment - it is lovely to see children from all ages mixing. The Junior Leaders are also doing a fantastic job engaging the younger pupils in games using the parachute, snakes and ladders, the large blocks and general old fashioned playground games.

We have introduced a new spelling programme for years 3-6 called Sounds and Syllables. It is a comprehensive programme to support the children to spell using a spelling voice. Please ask them about their spelling voice and get them to show you. We are going to be filming parts of the spelling lessons so you can see how it is taught and then you can support them at home with their spellings. Here is guide to get you started <https://jwed.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Sounds-Syllables-Flyer.pdf>

Year 6 start their Key Stage Two SATs next week. I know you will join me in wishing them the very best of luck. To all Year 6 Parents- including myself this year- make sure they are not getting overwhelmed or too anxious. We just want them to try their best - that is all we can ask of them.

Mrs Gordon-Weeks



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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 1: Mobile Phone Policy update

We would like to thank everyone for following our mobile phone policy. We will continue to ask politely for you to put mobiles away when you enter the site; this also means hands free or on speaker. It is really important we are all fully focused at pick up to engage in the safety of our children as well as supporting our safeguarding policy.



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.



Priority 2: Arbor and communication

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School emails sometimes going to junk folders	<p>Try these steps: Open your Junk Email folder and select the messages you want to keep. Select the It's not junk button. If you've blocked the sender by mistake, open your blocked senders list and select delete from the blocked list (normally using the dustbin icon). Add the sender (Arbor) to your Safe Senders list or contacts.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Titles in the Arbor so messages can be re-traced	<p>We have contacted Arbor; they have said it is not something they currently do but are looking into it.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More communication with parents with incident follow-ups	<p>We have discussed the process with incident follow ups. Phone calls will be made by class teachers or key stage leads to discuss incidents and it will be discussed together if a follow up is required.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved information sharing between office staff and teachers	<p>Pink slips are used to communicate information given during the school day and these are handed personally to teachers. This is possibly not as efficient if calls come in after 3.10pm so please ensure as far as possible, any new arrangements for after school collection are made earlier in the day so we can get messages to the class teachers before dismissal.</p>



Priority 3: Homework feedback

This term we will be updating our homework policy. Some excellent parent feedback has already helped us start the process.

Update:

We have gathered information from the pupils, staff and parents. We are looking at trialing a different format for homework for Term 6 in two year groups: **Year 2 and 4**. We will gather more feedback near the end of term 6 and then roll out a new system for the new academic year.

Looking more deeply into homework, it is clear that different year groups require different things so this will be reflected in the new policy.

As always thank you for your feedback.



Courtesy walking around school at drop off and pick up

Please ensure that when walking around school with your children that you are courteous to other families ensuring that everyone is taking care and looking where they are going. Please ensure that your full attention is on your children at all times.

Reminder: It is great to see so many of our pupils scooting and cycling to school. Within the school gates, please ensure that if your child is coming to school on a scooter/bike, that they come off and push their bike/scooter within the school grounds.



Courtesy when parking around school at drop off and pick up

Please ensure that when parking near school to drop off/pick up your child, that you observe road markings for where it is legal/illegal to park. We recommend arriving early and parking a little further away from school and walking.

Reminder:

It is illegal to park on double yellow lines. The traffic officers are going to be making more visits to Dashwood; they are giving out fines.

We are contacting the council about putting zig lines outside the gates; this will carry 3 points on your license if you park on them.

Parking the pavement could endanger lives - parking on the pavement means that our pupils and their families cannot pass safely.

Please be courteous of everyone in our school community and think about the safety of all.



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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. Please note: gingham summer shorts or all in one jumpsuits/playsuits are not part of the uniform.



<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?



Cherry Nursery

Cherry Class have been busy welcoming new children, helping them to settle in happily and feel part of the group. The children have been making the most of the lovely weather, enjoying lots of outdoor play and exploration. They have particularly loved imaginative role play in the mud kitchen, creating "delicious" soups and practising their washing-up skills. These experiences have supported their creativity and independence, while having lots of fun together.



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Plum Nursery

This term, Plum Class have been enjoying exploring the exciting world of dinosaurs. The children have been creating their own dinosaur habitats using a range of materials, supporting their creativity and imaginative play. They have also been learning about different types of dinosaurs, describing their features and developing their observational drawing skills.

In maths, the children have been consolidating their understanding of shape by matching, naming and describing them, as well as using them in play. They have also begun developing early number skills, using scales to match quantities and carefully counting out objects.



Reception

Peach and Pear classes were set the challenge of building a ship that would float. They began by investigating which materials float and which sink, before learning about the different parts of a ship and using this knowledge to design and label their own models. The children then built their ships using junk modelling, exploring different ways to join materials. At the end of the project, they tested their creations in the water tray, with lots of success!



Pirate Day



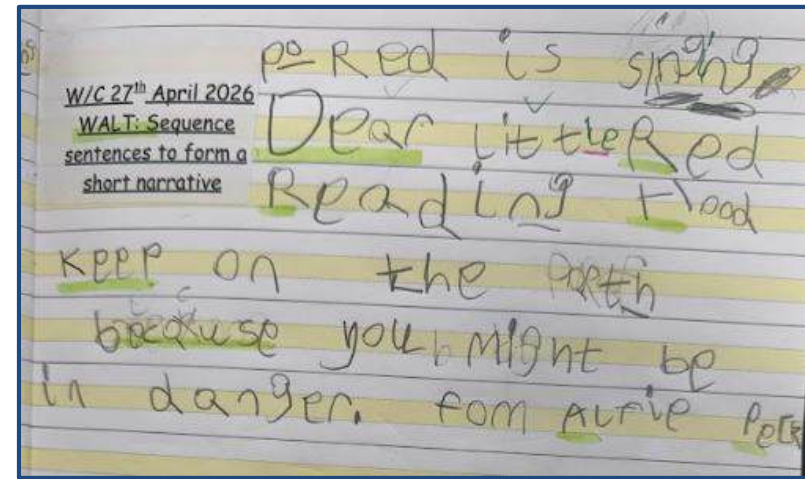
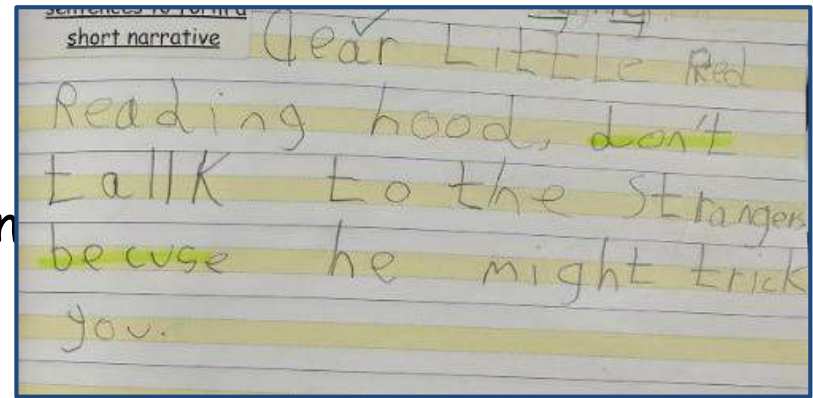
To launch their new topic, Reception had a fantastic Pirate Day full of adventure! The children joined "Pirate School," where they created their own pirate names, learned some pirate lingo and practised important pirate duties like scrubbing the deck and climbing the rigging. Throughout the day, they enjoyed a range of exciting activities, including weighing and sharing treasure, designing pirate hats, bravely walking the plank over 'shark-infested' waters, and drawing and labelling their very own treasure maps.



Year 1

Year 1 have been enjoying our new story 'Little Red Reading Hood'. This is a twist on the classic story 'Little Red Riding Hood'. We have written a message to Little Red Reading Hood to try and warn her about the wolf. Next week, we will also be writing a telling off to the wolf. We can't wait to see this in action with role - play!

In science this week, the children have been learning that animals can eat different things. We have also started to explore the terms herbivores, carnivores and omnivores.



Year 2

Year 2 have had a brilliant couple of weeks. We have read 'The Barnabus project' which has lead to some fantastic diary entries about how they would feel if they were trapped like Barnabus.

In maths, we have continued our fractions topic, working out halves, thirds and quarters.

Last but not least, Year 2 have blown us away with their performance of Hansel and Gretel this term. They all spoke well and sung the songs so confidently. Thank you to all the parents and carers that have supported in learning lines and providing costumes.



Year 2 Multi Skills

Year 2 had a brilliant day at Wykham Park, where they took part in a variety of skills based activities including sun and frost, golf, shooting and many more. It was wonderful to see the pupils so engaged in the sports activities. It was also fantastic to see lots of ex-Dashwood pupils leading the sports sessions as sports leaders too!



KS1 Farm Trip

Our KS1 trip to Little Rollright Farm was a fantastic experience for all the children!

Each class had the opportunity to bring their science learning to life by exploring what farm animals eat and learning about different life cycles.

The children loved seeing the wide variety of farm animals and their new babies, holding a real chicken egg, and planting their own dwarf bean seed to take home.

It was a memorable day filled with excitement, curiosity, and hands-on learning — and the children returned to school with huge smiles on their faces!

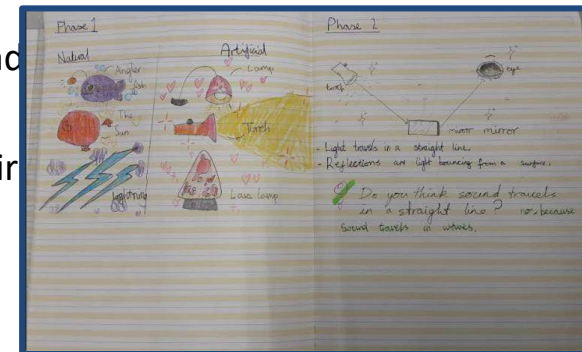
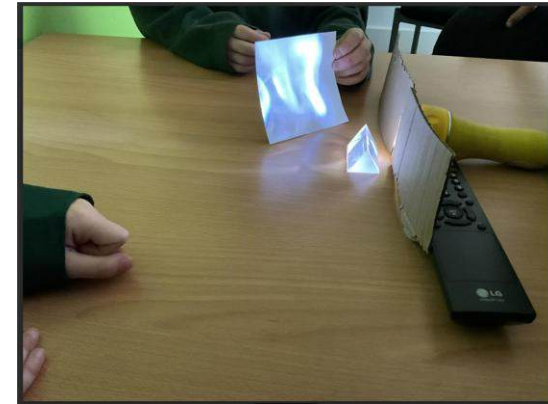


Year 3

Over the last couple of weeks, Year 3 have been working hard across a range of exciting subjects. In maths, we have been developing our understanding of fractions, focusing on adding and subtracting them with increasing confidence. In English, we wrote an impressive warning story, exploring the dangers and safety around water. The pupils used vivid language and thoughtful ideas to create engaging and meaningful pieces of writing.

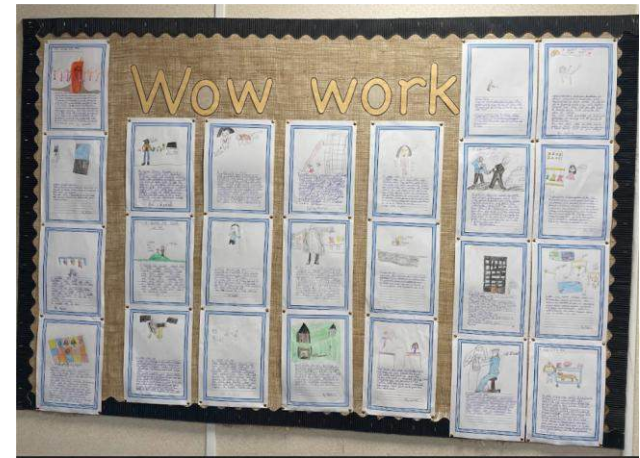
In science, we have been focusing on light. We carried out fun and memorable investigations, such as splitting light with prisms and conducted an experiment to decide the best reflective materials to use for designing new book bags. In PE, we have been enjoying dance sessions on the field and developing our hockey skills. Meanwhile, in music, the children have been practising how to play the recorder, showing great focus and improving their technique each week.

It has been a busy and rewarding time, with lots of fantastic learning taking place across the curriculum.



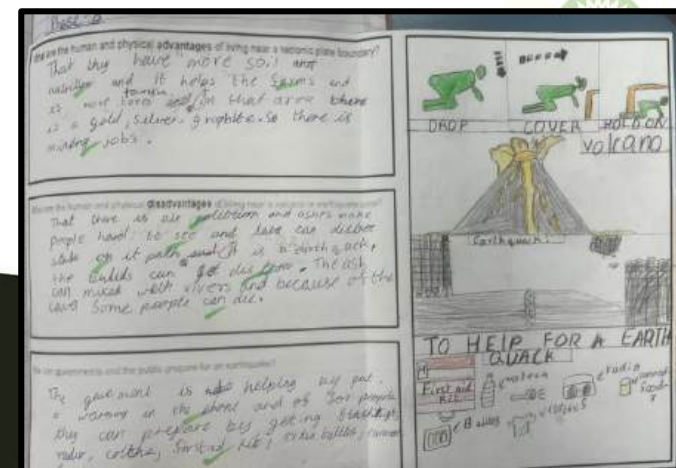
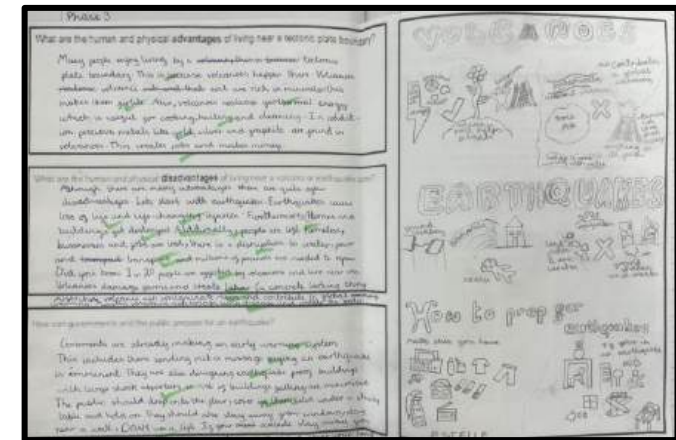
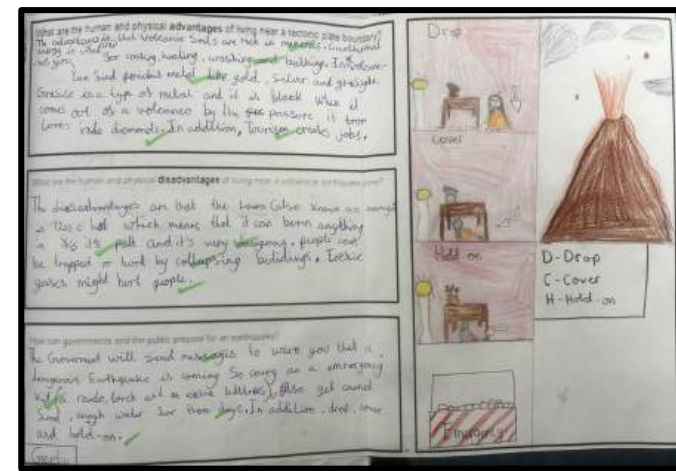
Year 4

What an amazing start to the term we have had! Our topic this term is computing and we certainly have some expert programmers in Year 4! To start our unit, we have been programming a series of games on Scratch. To successfully create the games, we needed to code a score, compare numbers and use the IF, THEN and ELSE commands. Our next challenge is to programme microbits. Linked to our computing unit, we have explored the story A Coder Like Me. In the story it discusses what skills and qualities a coder needs. Using this text, we chose a career which we would like to pursue in the future and created our own inspirational book page based on this role! Our book pages are proudly displayed on our WOW wall for all to see.



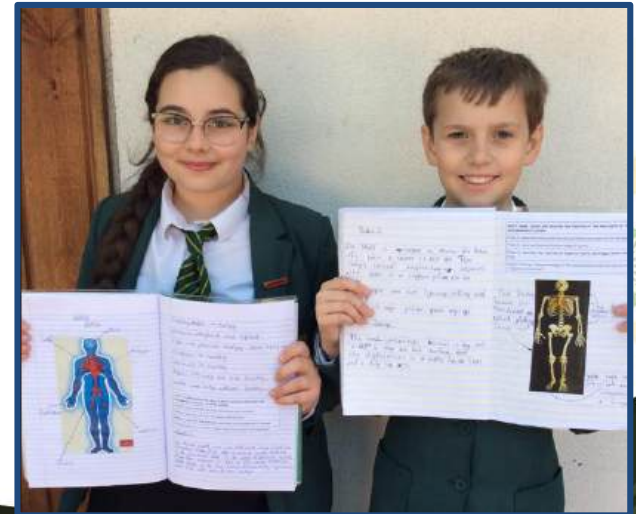
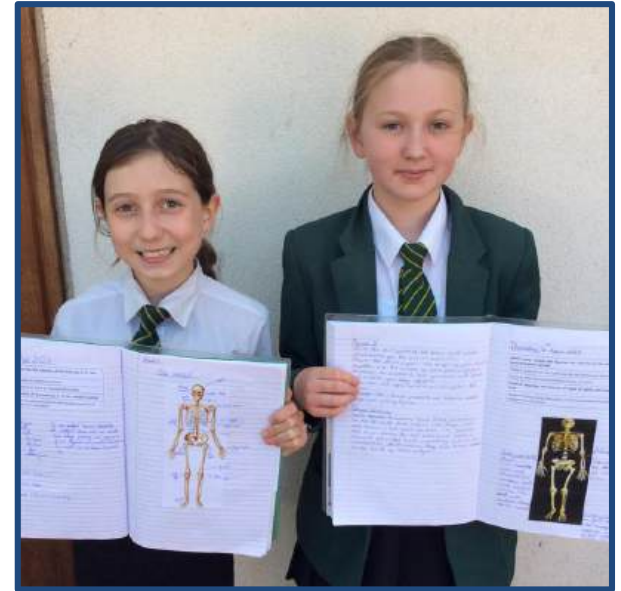
Year 5

Year 5 have been very busy this term and have already completed a unit of learning on Earthquakes and Volcanoes. They have a greater understanding of how the layers within Earth and tectonic plates create these powerful forces of nature. Our Phase 3 outcome focussed on some of the benefits of living in these areas (precious minerals, rich soil and tourism) as well as some of the devastating human and economic impacts. We have been studying War Game by Michael Foreman which has given us a great insight into the causes and horrors of WWI. Finally, we have been busy sewing again for an exciting project and we can't wait for you to come and see their gorgeous creations in the whole school gallery at the end of term. Well done Year 5!



Year 6

Year 6 have had a great start to Term 5. They have been extremely engaged with their new science unit all about the human body including the musculoskeletal system, digestive system and circulatory system. In literacy, they have been using their scientific knowledge to write their own newspaper reports for an alien newspaper where humans have landed on their planet for the first time. During maths lessons, they have been working hard on shape and angles including how to find missing angles and the interior angles of polygons. On top of all of this they have continued to practice their arithmetic, grammar, spellings and reading skills in order to best prepare them for their upcoming SATs assessments.



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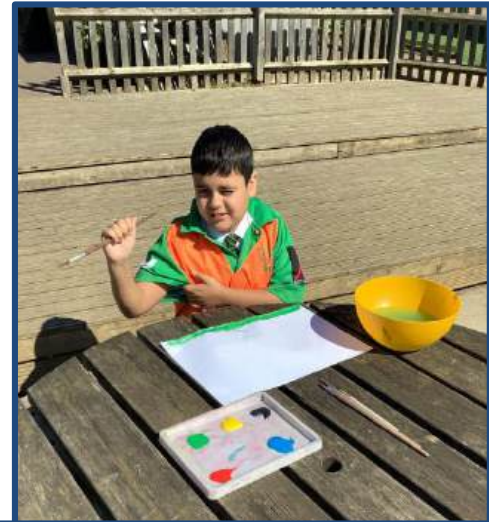
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Laurel Class

The pupils in Laurel Class have been working hard this term and have been enjoying learning new information about various countries around the world in their Geography lessons.

They have been able to experience the music and food of different countries such as Japan and Poland. They have also learnt how to explain the natural and human features of the countries.

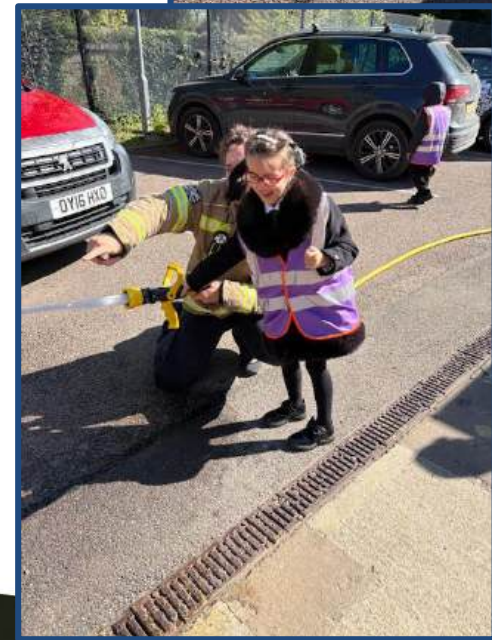
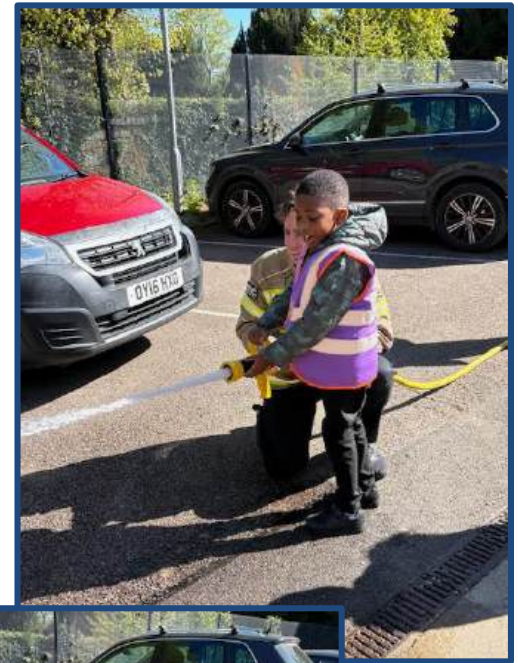
Lot's of their amazing work is being displayed in the new 'floor book' we are creating for Laurel Class.



The Treehouse

The pupils in the Treehouse have been learning about the story 'The Rainbow Fish' this term. The pupils have enjoyed exploring different textures which represent the Rainbow Fish shiny scales. They have also been using their creative skills to make their own representations of the Rainbow Fish character.

The Treehouse pupils also went on a very exciting trip to the local fire station. The pupils enjoyed learning about fire engines earlier in the year and seeing a fire engine in real life really brought their learning to life, which was very exciting!





Up and coming events and dates for your diary



<https://dashwood.academies.aspirationsacademies.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2026/05/Updated-Term-5-dates-2026.pdf>



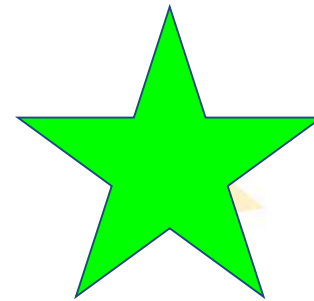
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Parent and Carer Support Section



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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**
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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

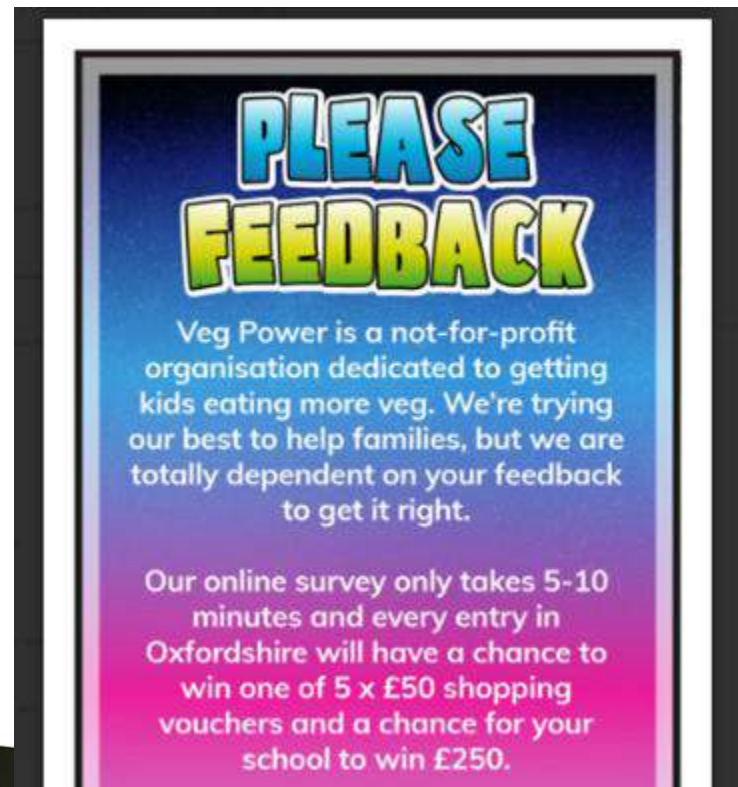


To watch the
videos, scan these
QR codes





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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