



Holley Park Academy

Autumn Term Newsletter 2025-2026

Headteacher's Welcome

Dear Parents and Carers,

As we reach the end of another busy autumn term, I want to take a moment to thank you all and wish you a festive start to the Christmas season. It has been a term of change, and the children have coped admirably, approaching their learning with positivity and resilience. We are also very grateful to parents and carers for your patience and understanding as we have navigated these changes together. Thanks to this continued partnership, we have made an excellent start to the academic year, and it's been wonderful to see the children engage with their learning and make progress in different ways.

Thank you, too, for the fantastic support shown at all our events this term, from reading cafés to Christmas performances, concerts, sing-a-longs, and nativities! The children are always so proud to share their work and performances with you, and your support makes these occasions even more special. A huge thank you also goes to our dedicated staff for their hard work and commitment.

I am very much looking forward to seeing what we can achieve together next term and beyond. From everyone at school, we wish you a very Merry Christmas and a happy, restful New Year, and we look forward to welcoming pupils back on **Monday 5th January**.

With best wishes,

Mrs L. Curtis

Headteacher

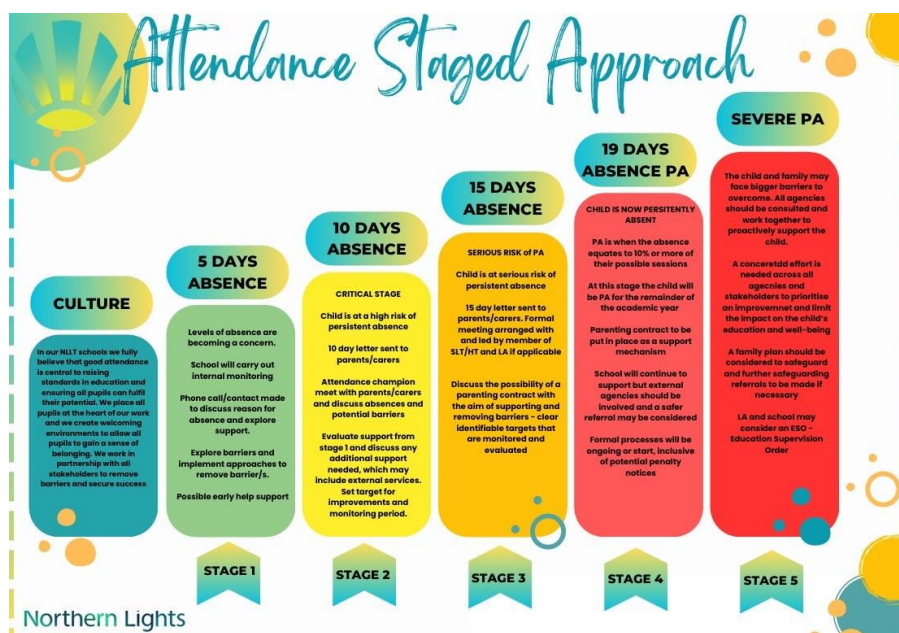
Term Dates 2025 - 2026

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March 2026							April 2026							May 2026						
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June 2026							July 2026							August 2026						
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School closed/Holidays
Bank Holidays
Inset Days – pupils not in school

A reminder that school will close for the Christmas holidays on **Friday 19th December at 3.15pm** and reopen to pupils on **Monday 5th January 2026**. A list of key dates for spring term will be shared with you when we return for the new academic year.

Attendance and Punctuality



We fully believe that good attendance and punctuality is central to raising standards in education and ensuring all children can fulfil their potential. Children need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education: missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. For this reason, school will continue to proactively work in partnership with all parents/carers to promote and secure good attendance and overcome any barriers through strong partnership working. The current school's attendance policy is available to parents and carers via our school website.

Thank you for your support in ensuring the best possible outcomes for your children.

Children's Snacks and School Meals

A reminder that children are permitted to bring in a healthy snack for morning breaktime. Please refrain from sending in high-fat or high-sugar products, such as crisps and confectionary. Please be aware that we are also an allergen-aware school, therefore children are not permitted to bring nut-based items into school.

Lunch bookings

Please could we remind parents that at least a week's notice is required to change a pupil's meal choice from that submitted and that pupils should remain on the same meal pattern

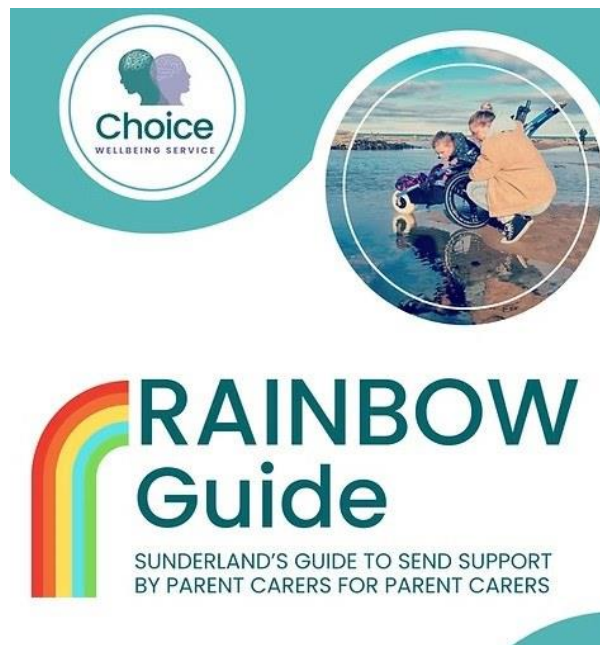
for at least half a term. If you have not already done so, please could you ensure that you complete the [lunch patterns form](#) as soon as possible before the end of term.

Lunches must be booked and paid for at least weekly in advance via the School Comms app. Please note that lunches can be booked and paid for on a weekly, monthly, termly or even yearly basis.

Collection of Children

A reminder that, if your child requires collecting from the main office at dismissal time, this must be by prior arrangement and as close to 3.15pm as possible to avoid children missing out on their learning time.

Family Support



Choice Wellbeing Service are the creators of the Rainbow Guide. The Rainbow Guide is a Sunderland-specific guide to the local services and agencies that support families with SEND children. The guide was created by parents and carers for parents and carers and is very easy to follow. It gives up-to-date guidance on what each organisation can (and cannot) do to support Sunderland families of SEND children. Please download a copy of the guide here: <https://www.choicewellbeingservice.org/> or come into school, where we will happily provide you with a printed copy.

together for children SUNDERLAND

The Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme - named 'Wear Here 4' in Sunderland - is a Department for Education funded programme delivered locally and providing fun, enriching activities and tasty, nutritious meals during school holidays.

Wear Here 4 Spring, Summer and Winter programmes provide school-aged children with an opportunity to get involved in a range of activities centred around sports, culture, arts and learning, as well as providing healthy meals and activities based on developing cooking skills and knowledge about nutrition, that families can use at home. Young people also get the chance to socialise with friends and make new ones, with children across the city coming together to get involved.

With more clubs and an ever-growing range of activities and provision, there is something for everyone. From sports to dance, crafts, outdoor fun and there is even a spot of science.

The HAF programme aims to give children the chance to have healthy happy holidays so they can:

- be more active
- learn new skills
- meet up with friends and make new ones
- get a tasty nutritious meal
- work together and stay safe

Funding for the programme has been provided from the Department for Education (DfE) to Together for Children for families eligible for **Free School Meals**.

Sessions are free for children and young people who:

- Live in Sunderland
- Are of school age (between 4 and 16 years old)
- Are eligible for means-tested free school meals during term time
- Have a special educational need or disability (up to age 25)

Bookings for our Winter HAF open are now live at: [EEQU - Together for Children Sunderland booking system.](#)

Am I eligible for Free School Meals?

If you are a parent in receipt of any of the benefits listed below, your child is likely to be eligible for free school meals. If you aren't sure if you are eligible, please contact us on 0191 561 1417 or freeschoolmeals@togetherforchildren.org.uk and one of the team will try to help you.

Your child might be able to get free school meals if you receive any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you're not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
- Universal Credit - your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)



A child's mental health is just as important as their physical health and refers to the way they think, feel and behave.

Children and young people, just like adults, can experience mental health problems including depression, self-harm, anxiety disorders and eating disorders.

There are a wide variety of services in Sunderland that can support a child with their mental health and wellbeing. Some services are open to everyone in the community, and others may have eligibility criteria.

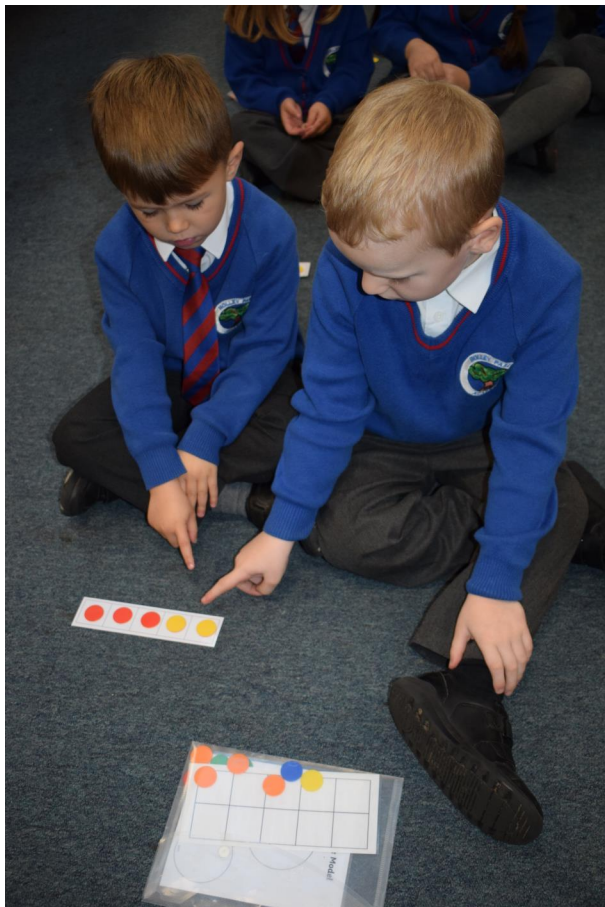
For more information about these services, please visit: [Mental Health: Children and Young People | Links for Life Sunderland](#)

EYFS News

What a busy and exciting half term we've had in Early Years! The reception children have been amazing phonics detectives, practising their blending skills to read lots of CVC words like cat, pin, and map. In maths, we've been hands-on explorers, making numbers to 5 using cubes, counters, and even our own fingers! Our large mark-making area has been buzzing with creativity, the children have even used each other to explore mark making. We also learned all about road safety, practising how to "stop, look, and listen" like real traffic superheroes. To top it all off, we explored exciting changes in materials—melting, mixing, squishing, and watching what happens when things transform. What a wonderful half term of learning and discovery!









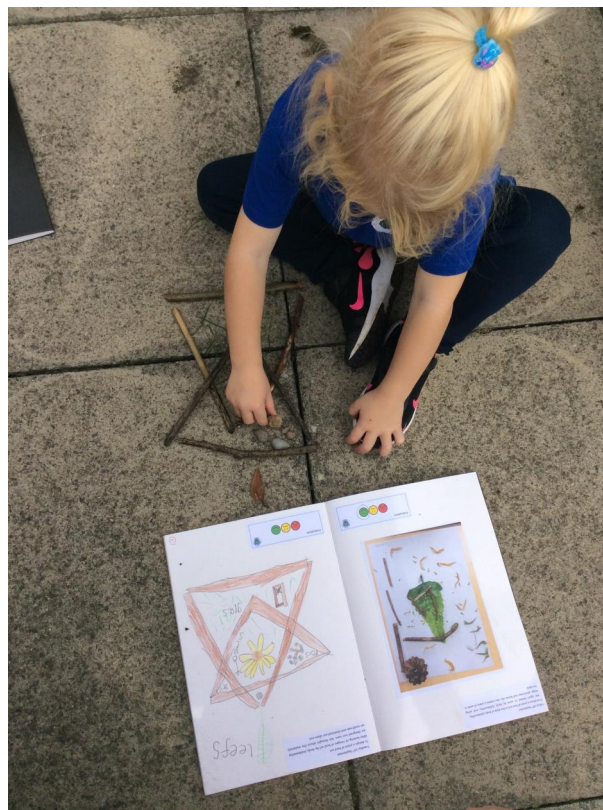
Year 1 News

We have had a very busy term since joining Year 1 and we would like to share some of our favourite moments.

In English we focus our learning round our class books. We began the term with the Three Billy Goats Gruff, moved on to some favourite Julia Donaldson texts and ended the term with the seasonal Snowman and then The Snowman and the Snowdog. We often worked in groups or with partners creating story maps or retelling the story using stick puppets.

Art and Technology have been lots of fun. In art we looked at work by Andy Goldsworthy and used natural materials to create our own work in the style of him. We then moved on to sewing in Technology. We mastered how to do a running stitch and then used our newfound skill to design and make a Christmas decoration.

Over the course of the autumn term, we have taken part in lots of different events including , hand washing workshop with the school nurse, odd socks day, Children in Need, held our reading café and enjoyed an amazing morning snow tubing where we met Santa's elves. Finally, we ended our first term in Year 1 by putting on a brilliant Christmas performance to get everyone in the Christmas spirit.





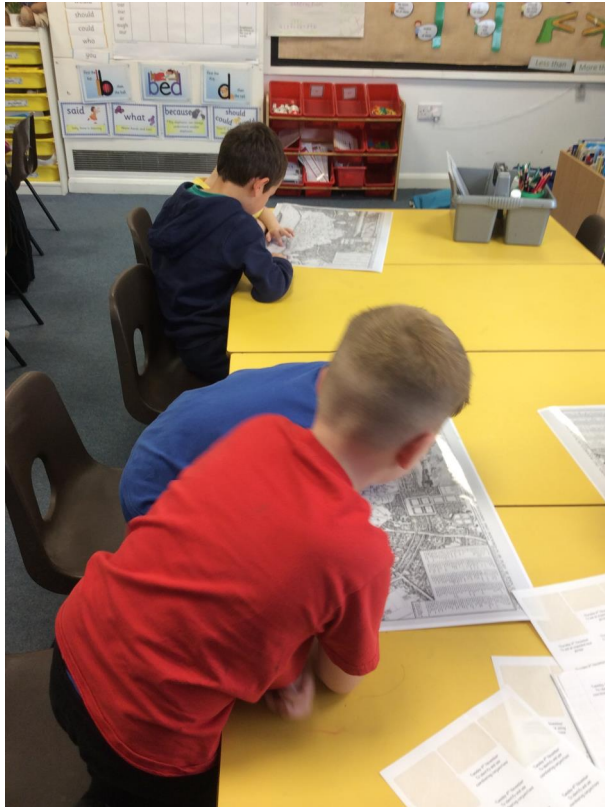
We have also been busy creating self-portraits in the style of the artist Frida Kahol. In science, we have enjoyed investigating different materials and finding which materials are most suitable.

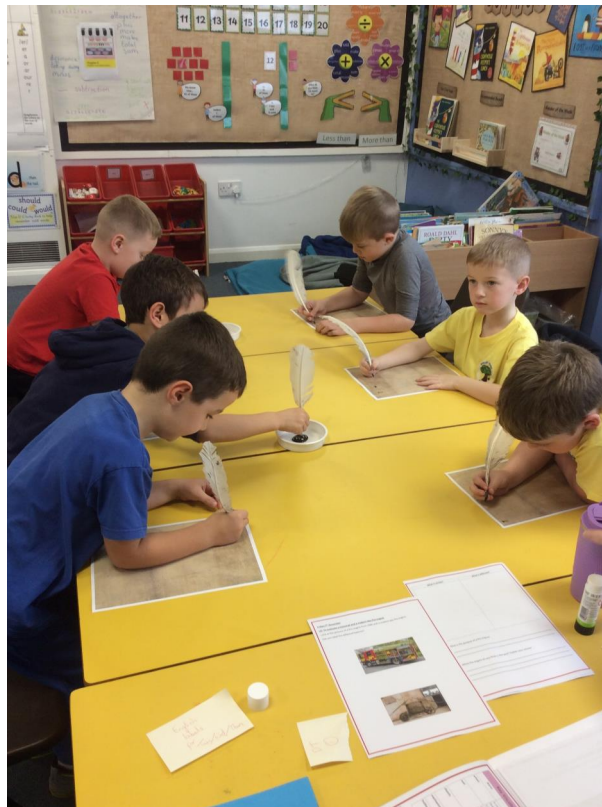
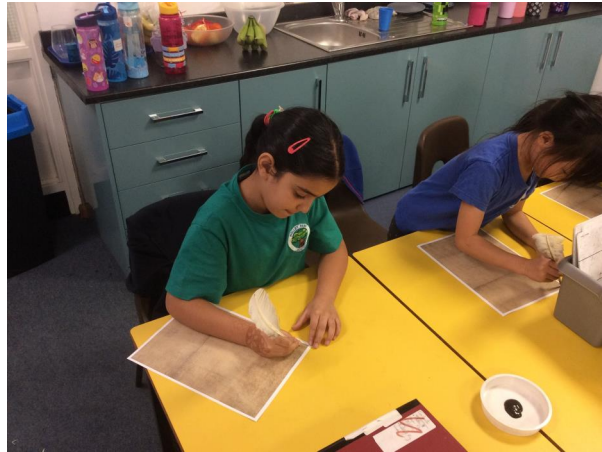
We have loved taking part in our special event days this year including odd sock day, children in need and our Christmas performance 'A miracle in town'.

Well done, Year 2!









Year 3 News

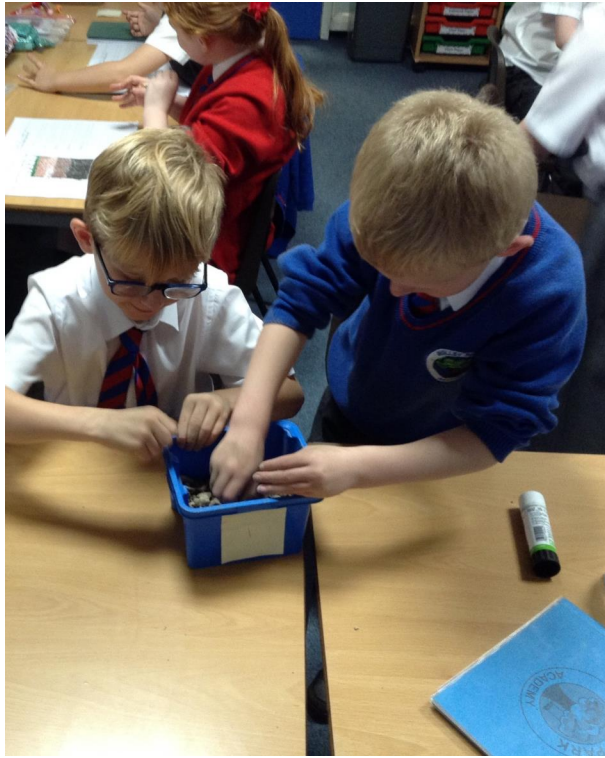
Year 3 have had a *fantastic* start to Key Stage 2! This term, we've journeyed from the Stone Age to modern day as we explored Homo sapiens, discovered fascinating facts about early life, and learned more about our place in the world through our Geography work on the local area. In Science, the children have thrown themselves into hands-on investigations, carrying out both comparative and fair tests as they explored rocks, fossils and light — their enthusiasm has been brilliant to see!

Our creative side has been just as busy. Year 3 experimented with carbon printing to produce some striking artwork, and they even became digital animators, using iMotion to create their

own stop-motion animations! In DT, they have been thinking carefully about what makes a healthy meal, with the highlight being designing and cooking their very own nutritious pizzas.

It's been a lively, exciting term full of curiosity, creativity and fun — and we can't wait to see what the next one brings!











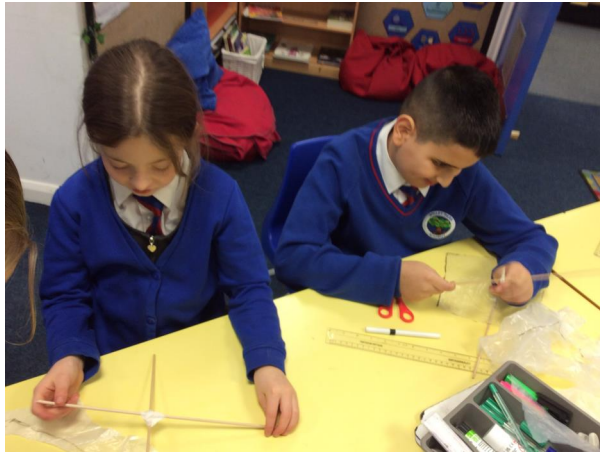


Year 4 News

What a brilliant start to Year 4 we have had! The children have been absolutely amazing and have been busy working hard on all sorts of things! In Art we have researched the artist Owen Jones and compared his artwork with that of Julia Rothman. Everyone made some fabulous lino prints in the style of Owen Jones! All of the children dressed up for and looked brilliant as Vikings for a Viking Day workshop, learning a lot about this period in history and having loads of fun in the process! This term, we have carried out investigations into states of matter and electrical circuits in science, which we have really enjoyed. In geography, we have used Digimaps to locate key countries, cities and places in Europe and have learnt to measure distances using an online map. The children have taken part in careers lessons to Guess My Job, learnt about their rights in PSHE and have been learning to say dates in French. Thank you for your support of events such as Odd Socks days and Children in Need, where we have all enjoyed supporting worthwhile causes and helping others. We have loved singing and playing the recorder in Music and have been creating our own dances in P.E based on the water cycle. In computing we have been learning all about audio and creating our own podcasts. We have been busy making kites in Design Technology, which we loved testing out! They were all fabulous! We regularly hold Book Club, to promote a love of reading, where children give us book recommendations. Dogman is a big favourite on our class! Well done year 4A for a brilliant term.





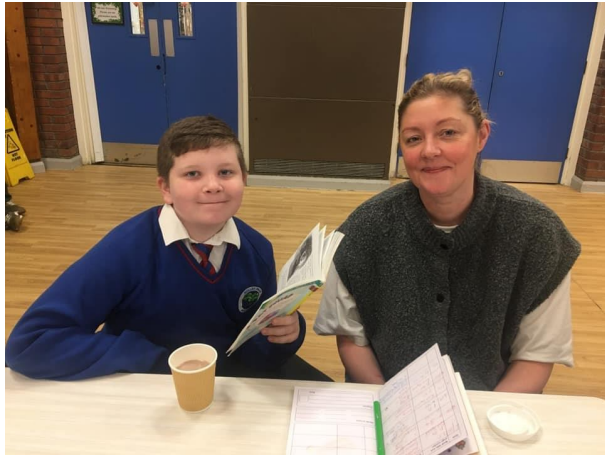


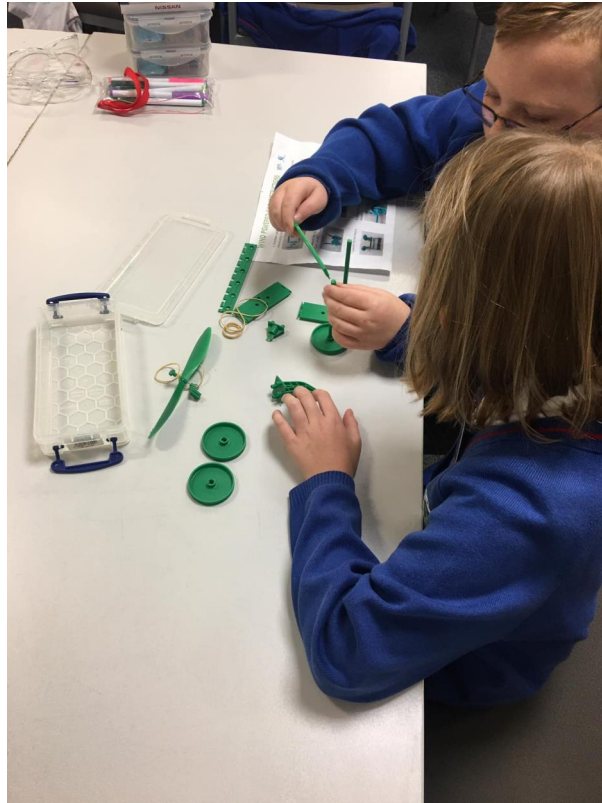
Year 5 News

Year 5 have had a lovely autumn term! We have been working exceptionally hard in our maths, exploring number and the operation of multiplication. In English, we have thoroughly enjoyed basing our literacy learning around the classic poem 'The Highwayman'. In DT, we

have designed and build bridges, and explored space as part of our learning in science! One of the highlights of the term was our class visit to Nissan, where we worked with the lovely Lesley to learn about sustainability and eco-power. We even got to see one of the famous Nissan robots at work! On a personal note, I would like to thank all parents and carers of Year 5 for their continuing support over the course of the term while we have navigated changes to staffing. Mr Garrett.



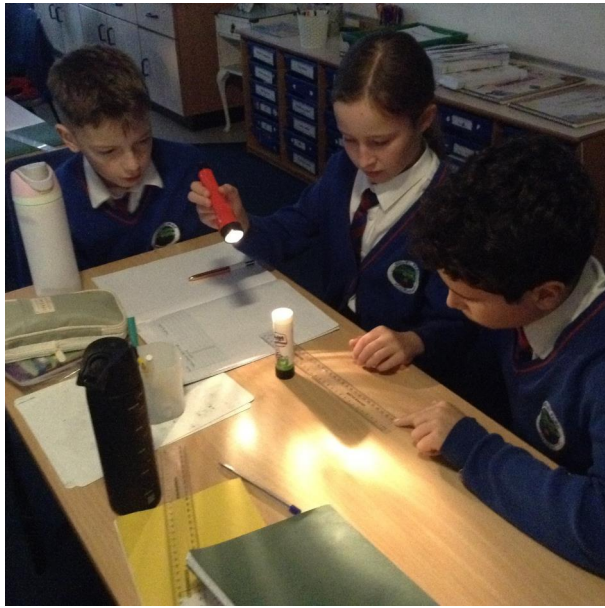




Year 6 News

Year 6 have had an action-packed term! We had an unforgettable residential at Derwent Hill, where the children challenged themselves, built confidence and worked brilliantly as a team. They also visited Nissan for an exciting robotics workshop, exploring how technology and engineering come together in the real world. In DT, the class stepped back in time by creating meals using wartime rations, discovering how creativity in the kitchen helped people make the most of limited ingredients. In Science, we have been investigating light and shadows, experimenting with torches to see how distance and angle can change what we observe. We also enjoyed a lovely Reading Café with parents, sharing stories together and celebrating our love of reading. It has been a fantastic term!







Contact Us



Updates are regularly shared via the SchoolComms texting service, ClassDojo, and the school's official Facebook page.

Holley Park Academy

Ayton Road

Washington

NE38 0LR

0191 417 0303

info.holleypark@nllt.co.uk

Key information around policy and curriculum for parents and carers is also published on our website:

[Holley Park Academy - Home](#)





