

# Grove Park Primary School Newsletter – End of Term 1

Dear Parents and Carers,

As Term 1 draws to a close, we'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and share some of the highlights from what has been a very successful start to the school year.

## ***A Successful Term 1***

We're incredibly proud of how well our pupils have settled into the new academic year. From learning achievements to positive friendships, Term 1 has been filled with fantastic moments, and we're looking forward to building on this momentum next term.

## ***Introducing Our New Heads of Community***



A big **congratulations** to **Ava and Lucy**, our newly elected Heads of Community!



In their manifestos, they wrote about how committed they are to support others, building strength in our values and leave a positive mark on the school community. I am sure they will be successful in their campaign to improve the school and work well with the school's leadership team. Well done to all the pupils who put themselves forward – your confidence and commitment were inspiring and shows how dedicated you are to our school.

## ***Thank You for Attending Parents Evening***

It was lovely to see so many of you during Parents Evening. These early conversations are key in helping us build strong relationships and working together to support your child's learning journey. Thank you for making time to attend, listening to staff and finding out more. As we move into Term 2, you will be continually updated on your child's progress, but our doors are always open if you should need us.

### ***Have your say - Parent Surveys Coming Soon***

We will soon be sending out several **parent surveys** focusing on different areas of school life, such as OPAL, EYFS transitions and many more. Your feedback is incredibly valuable to us, so please keep an eye out and take a few moments to complete **all** of them.

### ***Supporting Positive Behaviour***

We are proud of our approach to behaviour at school. Here's how we support and guide pupils:

- **Reinforcing the positives** – we always look for opportunities to highlight and reward great behaviour.
- **Dojos and Nojos** – recognising positive actions with Dojos and reflecting on choices with Nojos.
- **Celebrating success** – through weekly assemblies and special mentions.
- **Clear consequences** – where needed, we apply consistent and fair consequences to help children learn from their actions.

We understand that at times, behaviour in class can be challenging. This is a normal part of every school, and rest assured, we handle these situations with care and professionalism, always aiming to support every child and their family. Our teachers are always happy to help, please discuss matters regarding your child's behaviour and ways the school can help if you should need to.

### ***Stay Connected – Sign Up to Parent Dojo***



If you haven't already, please sign up to **Parent Dojo**. It's our main tool for sharing updates about your child's behaviour, helping us to maintain open communication and work in partnership with you. Your class teacher can support with this free platform, so please let them know if you need the relevant details.

♥ ***A Heartfelt Thank You to Our HSA Team*** ♥

We would like to extend a huge thank you to **Sheryl, Fay, Liz and Lana**, who are stepping down after years of incredible service as part of our HSA. Their dedication, creativity, and tireless efforts have made a lasting difference to the school – not just through fundraising, but in building a strong, vibrant school community.

Their work has changed the lives of so many children, and the legacy they leave behind is truly valuable. We will sincerely miss their presence and passion. The new HSA members will be introducing themselves to you soon – we look forward to seeing what the next chapter brings! For now, thank you to everyone who has supported and contributed to the HSA's work over the years.



# ATTENDANCE

At Grove Park attendance matters. We ask our pupils to have 100% attendance because we value your children and would like to see them!

## Building Strong Foundations

The early years of school are when children learn essential skills like reading, writing, maths, and social interaction. Missing school – even just a day or two each month – can lead to gaps in learning that are hard to catch up on later.

## Creating Good Habits for Life

Regular attendance builds routines and a strong work ethic. Children who get into the habit of coming to school every day are more likely to be engaged, motivated, and responsible as they grow older.

## Developing Friendships and Confidence

School is not just about lessons – it's also where children learn how to work and play with others. Poor attendance can make it harder for children to form friendships, feel part of the class, and develop confidence.

## Everyday Counts

Did you know?

- Missing just **1 day every 2 weeks** adds up to nearly **4 full weeks** of lost learning in a year.
- Over the course of primary school, that's nearly **half a year** of missed learning!

## How You Can Help

- Aim for your child to attend school every day unless they are **genuinely unwell**.
- Book appointments (like dental or medical) **outside school hours** whenever possible.
- Take holidays **during school holidays**, not in term time.
- Talk to us if you're facing challenges – we're here to support you.



**Let's Work Together**

We understand that sometimes absences are unavoidable. If your child is having trouble with attending school – whether due to illness, anxiety, or family circumstances – please contact us. We're here to help.

Together, we can make sure your child has the best start in life through strong attendance and a love of learning.



# OPAL Newsletter

## Term 1



Opal's vision is that every child in every school has an amazing hour of high quality play every day—with no exceptions. We firmly believe in this vision, and our goal is to give every child at least one hour of excellent play each day. (<http://outdoorplayandlearning.org.uk>).

Welcome to Term 1 of our OPAL journey at Grove Park! After an unforgettable year of excitement, creativity, and growth, we're thrilled to kick off another fantastic year of outdoor play and learning. This year promises even more as we take on fresh challenges in every zone and introduce exciting new expansions to our play spaces. This year, every child will have the chance to try something new, and make their own discoveries in every zone.



### Planet Earth inspires our New Opal Challenges

As we move into the next stage of our OPAL journey, we're excited to introduce something new for the children—OPAL Challenges! These are weekly activity-based tasks set in each outdoor zone, designed to spark curiosity, creativity, and teamwork.

This term, our theme is Planet Earth, and the challenges have reflected this. From riding through the wind tunnel path, to designing beaches in the sandpit, making rivers in the Water Zone, or rescuing the sea creatures on the buggy boards. The children have been immersed into these challenges and successful achieving them. The challenge—clean our world in the sandpit has been a particular favourite—full of imaginative ideas and purposeful exploration.

### OPAL Rangers

This term, we welcomed a brand-new team of OPAL Rangers—and they've already made a brilliant start! Full of enthusiasm and positivity, our Rangers are quickly becoming key figures in the playground.

In just a few weeks, they've shown great initiative by supporting and guiding other children, helping everyone get involved in play, and encouraging others to follow our school values. Whether it's lending a hand, offering kind reminders, or helping with challenges in each zone, their presence is already making a real difference.

We're excited to see how they continue to grow in their roles and help lead the way in our OPAL journey this year.



These weekly activities not only make outdoor play more engaging, but also help children develop key skills such as **problem-solving**, **cooperation**, and **responsibility**. It's been fantastic to see them take ownership of their play spaces and approach each new challenge with such excitement and pride.

### What's Coming Next in Our OPAL Adventure

Our OPAL journey is growing and thriving! One of the firm favourites this year has been the **expanded Balance Zone**, where children have loved testing their skills on the new balance obstacle course. It's been fantastic to see their confidence and coordination soar as they take on new challenges.

In the **Water Zone**, children have been excitedly taking part in gardening challenges—seeding, watering, and nurturing sweetcorn and tomatoes. The highlight has been harvesting their fresh produce to feed the guinea pigs, helping them learn about growth, care, and responsibility through hands-on experience. They have also learnt how to make rain in a bottle.

Looking ahead, we're thrilled to bring back some popular events like **OPAL Club** during term time and **Welly Wednesday** in the New Year (more information to come), giving everyone more opportunities for outdoor fun and leadership.

**We need your help! Please see our donation poster.**



## Term 1 in Polar Bear Class

This term has been all about Me and My Stories!



In Literacy we have read 3 stories, The Polar Bear and the Snow Cloud, The Colour Monster goes to School and The Gingerbread Man.



We have been settling into school, learning about our values, dojos and routines.

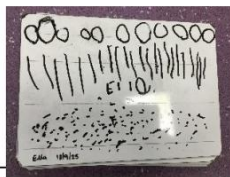
In Maths we have been learning numbers 1-5. We have been subitising, counting and ordering.



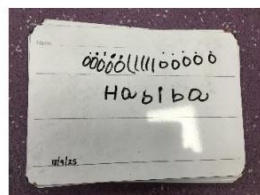
We made habitats for different animals in Science.



We did observational drawings of leaves in Art.



We have been practising our handwriting patterns including dots, circles, lines, stars and swirls.



We started French lessons and are having tons of fun learning through songs.

## Term 1 in Puffins

This term has been very busy getting to know each other and learning all about the Planet Earth!

Our Value Champions this term were:

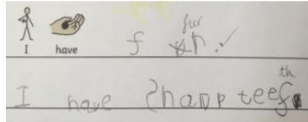
Lottie, Charlie, Dexter, Harlie, Enzo, Isaac!

Well done, we are so proud of you for demonstrating our school values, keep it up!



WRITING THIS TERM:

Can you guess what animal it is?



A walk around our local area:

We went on a walk around the local area to find some human and physical features. We also stopped off at the park!

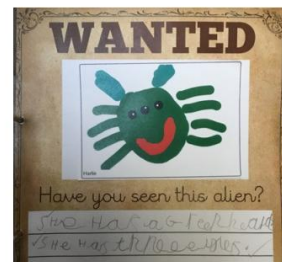
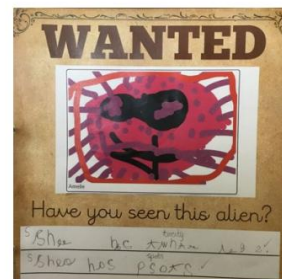


Alien Crash Landing



A visit to the church

We went to visit the Church in Bobbing. We got on the mini-bus and then Sue from the church showed us around.



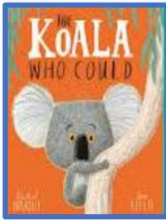
It has been a great start to the year and I look forward to welcoming them back in term 2, to learn all about the Three Queens!



# Snowy Owl Class



What an exciting and busy term it has been in Year 2! Our learning this term has taken us "Down Under," as we explored the amazing country of Australia. The children have absolutely loved discovering more about this fascinating part of the world – from its unique animals and landscapes to the people and culture that make it so special.



We have enjoyed reading two wonderful books: *The Koala Who Could* by Rachel Bright and *Our Home on Wheels* by Jessica and Stephen Parry-Valentine. The children have rewritten their own stories of Kevin the Koala and made leaflets comparing Australia to the UK.



One of the highlights of our Australian topic was a visit from the Didgeridoo Man! He shared fascinating facts about this traditional Aboriginal instrument and demonstrated how it's played. The children were inspired to create their own didgeridoos, decorating them with Aboriginal-style patterns and symbols.

In maths, we have been furthering our knowledge of numbers to 100.

We are continuing to practise counting in 2's, 5's and 10's and are now learning to count in 3's.



The children loved Scootability! They learnt how to manoeuvre safely around each other and moving obstacles like Mrs Barney! They also practised stopping safely.



We had a very interesting visit to Bobbing Church and learnt all about the different features.

Congratulations to our school values certificate winners this term: Amelia, Heba, Harry M, Nina & Alaia.

# Narwhal Class

This term our discovery topic was 'How did Britain change from Stone Age to Iron Age'

What a great first term we have had in Narwhal class where we have learnt lots of new knowledge as well as retrieval of our past learning.

This term has been our Forest School sessions where the children have done activities related to Stone Age, from cave paintings to being hunter gatherers and making stone age tools. They have enjoyed the sessions.



In science we have been both Palaeologists and Geologists, looking closely at fossils and rocks and learning how they are formed.



In our discovery art lessons we have looked at prehistoric art and used natural materials to make some paint as well as using charcoals to recreate some cave art.



Creative homework that has come in has been amazing. Well done to all those children. Some doing many pieces. It has been great to hear their explanations and see their PowerPoints.



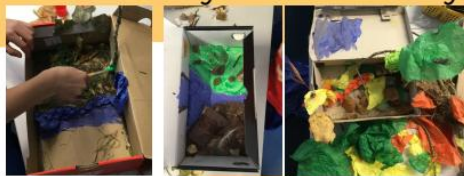


# ARCTIC FOX



## TERM 1

We have settled into Year 4 really well! . We have engaged in exciting activities and learnt lots of new things each week. We have shown great enthusiasm, kindness, and curiosity in everything we do. Here's a look at what's happening this month! We had fun making our dioramas to show a healthy and an unhealthy rainforest.



## DISCOVERY

Our class has been exploring the fascinating world of gorillas and the rainforests they call home! We've learnt all about gorillas' diets, habitats, and the serious issue of deforestation. We became writers and conservationists ourselves by creating detailed gorilla descriptions and persuasive pieces to encourage people to protect rainforests. To finish off our unit, we even filmed our own green screen interviews with conservationists.

## SCIENCE

In Science, our topic has been Animals Including Humans. We have learnt about the different types of teeth animals have and how their teeth show what kind of food they eat. We also explored the human digestive system and even carried out a fun experiment to show how it all works!



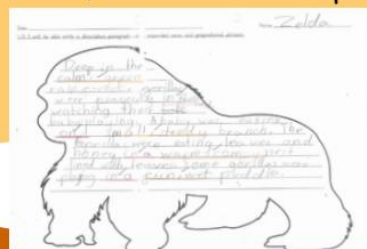
## CELEBRATION

A huge congratulations to our class value winners for term 1:

- ★ Molly
- ★ Tariq
- ★ Adelrik
- ★ Scarlett
- ★ Gabriel
- ★ Layton

## NEXT TERM

Next term, our topic will be The Mayans! We'll be exploring this fascinating ancient civilisation and learning about their culture, beliefs, and way of life. We're also very excited for our school trip to Kent Life, where we'll take part in a special Mayan day!





# Year 5 - Snow Leopards



Our topic this term has been Inspirational Women.

We have had a busy and exciting first term. We started our first week of Year 5 creating our own 'daredevil feats' and using our DT skills to create model planes, taking inspiration from Amelia Earhart's first plane, The Canary. We then tested these at the sandpit!



We have revisited and learnt new geographical vocabulary for features of a river as well as the physical and human features of Niagara Falls. This was important to make links to our writing about Annie Edson Taylor. We then compared this geographical knowledge to the River Stour in Canterbury to consider a local context.



In the later part of this term, we moved onto learning the history of the civil rights movement in relation to the story of Rosa Parks & Maya Angelou. We used drama to create interviews, acting as Rosa Parks, the Bus Driver or the white lady involved in the Bus story which then made waves in changing our society today.



Within our discovery learning we have worked on our sketching skills in Art to create portraits of Evita Peron, who we learnt about in our Pathways to Read.



Linking to our topic, in English we have been reading Queen of the Falls. We have produced various styles of writing from different point of views in the story events of Annie Edson Taylor's inspirational barrel journey down Niagara Falls.



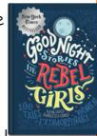
Our final piece we created a recount of events from Annie's perspective including emotive language and grammar features we learnt along the way.

When moving onto Rosa Parks story we have created a series of diary entries of the key events that lead to the significant bus boycott.

Handwritten notes and math worksheets showing calculations and text.

In maths, we have been working hard on place value, addition and subtraction. We have shown great resilience as a class to grasp some tricky concepts such as rounding.

In Pathways to Read the book 'Rebel Girls', has provided further insight to how women are considered inspirational to others through their achievements and impact on others' lives today. We have heard every child read part of this story each week, discussed vocabulary and made inferences from text.



In science, we have been learning forces. We have learnt about the different types of forces and investigated these along the way through measuring friction air resistance and water resistance.

Other topics that the children in Year 5 have been studying this term:

- Why do people have to stand up for what they believe in (RE)
  - Time and Food (French)
  - Online Safety (PSHE and Computing)
- Creating Quizzes (Computing, with links to our Discovery)
- No Outsiders storybook & Families and Relationships (PSHE)
  - Sports Leadership and Net & Wall (PE)
- 'What shall we do with the drunken sailor?' song & Harvest Festival songs (Music)

Handwritten French notes and a clock face showing time.

This term we spent Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October focusing on World Mental Health Day. We spent the day learning about some of the effects of struggling with mental health and strategies we can use to help manage this.

A huge congratulations to Jack, Cora, Francesca, Lilly-Mae and Hudson for being our value certificate winners this term!

We are looking forward to making many more memories with your children in Term 2 moving onto our Ancient Greece topic and sharing this all with you.



# Year 6-Reindeer Class



This term, our topic was:  
WW2.



During our Discovery and Writing lessons, we have written detailed newspaper reports to report the announcement of WW2. We have also written an explanation text (using parenthesis and direct speech), which we then presented to the class!

In maths this term, we have worked hard at trying different methods when using the four operations.

We had some visitors come to our class, to talk about their life as a Christian and Humanist.



In PE, we have worked hard to practise our sports leadership skills. We got to create a game to teach the rest of the class!

In Science, we explored light. In our investigation, we took a look at how shadows can change sizes, depending on the distance between the light source and object!

On World Mental Health Day, we learned strategies to use when we are feeling anxious or down.



We made our own 'worry jars' to store any worries we have!



In Art this term, we explored the dramatic scenes of the Blitz, using oil pastels to blend colours and recreate the smoky, fiery skies!



A huge well done to our value certificate winners this term: Eva-Lili, Ella, Jenson, Ava H, Sophie and Nikola!

Next term, our topic is 'Windrush'!