

## Newsletter

### 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023

It is wonderful to be able to welcome the children back for the new academic year. We have had an excellent few days, although rather warm. It is lovely to finally have the new walls built, the children seem very pleased with their new classrooms and it was delightful to see how excited they were showing you around on Monday. Here is some information about the year ahead – specifically dates that we have already planned in the diary. All the staff look forward to working with you during the year.

#### The Year Ahead

We are very excited about the curriculum and learning that is being planned for the year ahead. Details of this will be coming out soon to let you know topic areas for the year. We have once again signed up to various sports events (we are waiting on confirmation of these) and have our own trips and events planned to engage the children in their learning and enjoy this next year at school.

I am sharing diary dates for the whole year with you now. These are current plans and could be subject to change if unexpected events crop up. Events and activities will be added to throughout the year, but I hope sharing this with you now helps you to plan for the year ahead. More information about each item will be sent out as needed nearer the time.

#### Autumn Term:

September		November	
Thurs 7 <sup>th</sup> & Fri 8 <sup>th</sup>	Information sharing meetings for children new to class (Year 1, 3 & 5)	Wed 1 <sup>st</sup>	Vision Screening for Reception children
W/B Mon 11 <sup>th</sup>	After school/before school clubs starting	Thurs 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Y6 SAT information event 3.30pm
Wed 20 <sup>th</sup> & Thurs 21 <sup>st</sup>	Music lessons starting	Thurs 2 <sup>nd</sup> & Fri 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Grandparents Lunch
Mon 25 <sup>th</sup>	OPTA Fundraising Day – ‘The Abilities in Me’	Mon 6 <sup>th</sup> – Fri 10 <sup>th</sup>	Kingswood Residential for Kingfishers
October		W/B Mon 13 <sup>th</sup>	Anti-Bullying Week
Thurs 5 <sup>th</sup>	OPTA AGM Wine & Nibbles Evening	Wed 15 <sup>th</sup>	Flu Vaccinations
Mon 16 <sup>th</sup>	Friendship Run	W/B Mon 20 <sup>th</sup>	Parent Consultation Evenings (Late night on Tuesday)
Mon 16 <sup>th</sup>	Welcome Weekday 2.30pm	December	
Tues 17 <sup>th</sup>	Kingswood Meeting Kingfisher Parents 3.30pm	Fri 1 <sup>st</sup>	Welcome Weekday 2.30pm
Thurs 19 <sup>th</sup>	Hawks Trip to Zoological Museum in Cambridge	Wed 14 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Bingo (Evening event)
Fri 20 <sup>th</sup>	Individual and family group photos	Mon 18 <sup>th</sup>	Wrens and Robins Nativity - Morning and afternoon
Fri 20 <sup>th</sup>	Last day before October Half Term	Mon 18 <sup>th</sup> (TBC)	KS2 Carols at Church 6pm
Mon 30 <sup>th</sup>	Training Day	Tues 19 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Lunch and visit from Father Christmas
Tues 31 <sup>st</sup>	Return from October Half Term	Wed 20 <sup>th</sup>	Last Day of Autumn Term

#### Mrs Brown on Jury Service

As you all will be fully aware, Mrs Brown is the one that keeps this school functioning daily. She has been called up to do Jury service. We managed to delay it from this week, as that would have been a real disaster with all the start of year paperwork, but they are still wanting her there. Her new dates are for the two weeks starting Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October. It maybe that she is only needed for a few days, but she might not be here at all.

We have moved some things around to hopefully make those two weeks as smooth and easy as possible, but not having Sarah to answer the phone and your emails quickly will obviously have a bit of an effect. She will ensure I am up to speed on dinners and registers before then (and other things I probably don't know about yet), but please be kind to us that week as we all muddle through without Sarah here full-time in the office.

## Spring Term & Summer Terms:

<b>January</b>		<b>April</b>	
Wed 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Staff Training Day	Mon 15 <sup>th</sup>	Staff Training Day
Thurs 4 <sup>th</sup>	First day of Spring Term	Tues 16 <sup>th</sup>	First day of Summer Term
Thurs 11 <sup>th</sup>	Swimming session 1 – Hawks & Kingfishers	Tues 23 <sup>rd</sup>	School Photographer – Class and Year group photos
Thurs 18 <sup>th</sup>	Swimming session 2 – Hawks & Kingfishers	Tue 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Welcome Weekday 2.30pm
Thurs 25 <sup>th</sup>	Swimming session 3 – Hawks & Kingfishers	<b>May</b>	
Thurs 25 <sup>th</sup>	Young Voices to Birmingham	W/B 13 <sup>th</sup>	Y6 SATs week
<b>February</b>		Fri 24 <sup>th</sup>	Break up for May Half Term
Thurs 1 <sup>st</sup>	Swimming session 4– Hawks & Kingfishers	<b>June</b>	
Thurs 1 <sup>st</sup>	Welcome Weekday 2.30pm	Mon 3 <sup>rd</sup>	First day back from half term
Thurs 8 <sup>th</sup>	Swimming session 5 – Hawks & Kingfishers	Wed 5 <sup>th</sup>	Welcome Weekday 2.30pm
Thurs 15 <sup>th</sup>	Swimming session 6 – Hawks & Kingfishers	Wed 5 <sup>th</sup> & Thurs 6 <sup>th</sup>	Art Exhibition at school
Thurs 15 <sup>th</sup>	Break up for February Half term	Fri 14 <sup>th</sup>	Father’s Day Lunch
Friday 16 <sup>th</sup>	Staff Training Day	W/B Mon 17 <sup>th</sup>	Bikeability – Y6
Mon 26 <sup>th</sup>	First day back after half term	<b>July</b>	
<b>March</b>		Mon 8 <sup>th</sup>	Annual Reports published
Wed 6 <sup>th</sup> – Fri 8 <sup>th</sup>	Hawks residential trip to Burwell House	Fri 12 <sup>th</sup>	Sports Day & Parent Lunch
Mon 11 <sup>th</sup>	Mother’s Day Lunch	Wed 17 <sup>th</sup>	Kingfishers Play (afternoon and evening)
W/B Mon 18 <sup>th</sup>	Parent Consultation Evenings (Late night on Wednesday)	Thurs 18 <sup>th</sup>	Y6 Leavers Trip and Party
Tues 26 <sup>th</sup>	Hawks Play Performance (afternoon and evening)	Fri 19 <sup>th</sup>	Y6 Leaver’s Assembly 9am
Thurs 28 <sup>th</sup>	Easter Church Visit (TBC)	Fri 19 <sup>th</sup>	Last Day of Academic Year
Thurs 28 <sup>th</sup>	Last Day of Spring Term		

### Welcome Weekday

We will be continuing to offer our Welcome Weekday events throughout the year. From 2.30pm we invite parents and carers to join the afternoon lessons in school. This will allow you to see the school in action and to be able to join in your children’s learning.

There are five Welcome Weekdays across the school year, one on each of the weekdays. We do hope that you will be able to join us for at least one of the days to see your child’s class for the afternoon. The first one this term will be on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> October.

### Y6 SATS Information Evening

The children in year 2 will not be taking Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) in the summer term this year as the government has made these optional.

The Year 6 tests are continuing to administered and will take place in the week of 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

Miss Brown will be holding an information event on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> Novemeber so she can share more information about these tests with parents and carers. There will be an opportunity to see examples of tests and discuss what level of work and understanding is required to ‘pass’ the test in English, Maths and Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation, and the Teacher Assessment in Writing

We plan to hold more workshops and information evenings on different topics including phonic teaching and online safety during the year (dates to be confirmed).

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## Clubs at School

You should have already had information about the clubs that we are offering this term and how to sign up for them. We are pleased to say that there is an activity happening every day after school and we have introduced a non-sports club too.

**Monday:** Kids with Bricks with Miss Smith. A 'lego' club with challenges and competitions with other schools. (Y2-6)

**Monday:** Choir with Miss Brown – learning songs for the Young Voices events in January, but all children welcome even if they do not want to attend the Young Voices event. (Y3-6)

**Tuesday:** Dance Club with Miss Charlotte of Talent Dance Academy. A fun dance class, learning routines and performing to parents at the end of term. (Y1 – 6)

**Wednesday:** Netball Club with Mr Puckey through Primary Sports Stars. Practise netball skills and play games. (Y3-6)

**Thursday:** Gymnastic Club with Miss Smith through Primary Sports Stars. Fun based sessions to learn different aspects of gymnastics and develop their strength, coordination and flexibility (Y1-6)

**Friday morning:** Running Club with Mr Puckey (no charge) Come and start the day with some running drills and friendly competition. (Y1-6)

**Friday:** Team Games with Mr Puckey through Primary Sports Stars. A variety of team games to have fun through exercise. (Y3-6)

Music lessons are also continuing to be provided by Matt Young. He teaches drums, guitar, bass, ukulele, piano and singing. Speak to Mrs Brown in the office if you would like more information on music lessons.

For any information about any of the clubs, please get in touch with the school office and if Mrs Brown can't help, she'll be able to point you in the right direction!

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## The Curriculum

Each class will share more details of their curriculum for this term soon.

Main topic for History and Science this term are:

Robins: "Where I live? Villages and Cities" and Animals including humans – classification and senses (Where I live is part of both the history and geography curriculums)

Hawks: "Rainforest and Climate Change" and Animals including humans – teeth, digestion and skeletons

Kingfishers: Mountains, Rivers and Volcanoes and Properties and Changes in Materials

As you know we teach our English through class reading books. Class reading books are carefully chosen so that throughout the school there are a diverse range of genres and authors, and a mixture of classic and modern stories. The children have access to a wide range of books in the school library and are encouraged and helped by their teachers to find books suitable for their interests and reading stage.

Class books this term are for Kingfishers The Chouse With Chicken Legs by Sophie Anderson, Hawks are reading The Highland Falcon Thief by MG Leonard & Sam Sedgman. Robins will be reading The Tiger Who Came to Tea by Judith Kerr and Flat Stanley by Jeff Brown.

We are, again, arranging trips for each class this term to enrich the learning in either their history or science topics. We are trying to be mindful of the costs that this involve but do feel that these enrichment activities to support the in-school learning is beneficial and very powerful for their learning. We hope by letting you know well in advance about these costs, it will help you budget. Day trips will not happen for Kingfishers in the Autumn term or Hawks in The Spring term due to their residential trips.

Kingfishers have already been informed about their trip. Please continue to make your financial contributions – thank you for this. A meeting will be held to share more information straight after school on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October. A letter will be sent out to Hawks children soon explaining about the 3 day/2 night residential that has been booked for March 2024. Burwell House is situated just north of Cambridge and is a large house in a private setting. Activities are centred around the Geography curriculum as well as being a great opportunity to be away from school with classmates.

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## Staffing at Offord

We are very pleased to welcome Mrs Em Storr in Wrens class. She will be working alongside Mrs Taylor, with Mrs Taylor in on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and Mrs Storr taking the class on Thursdays and Fridays. They have been out on home visits this week and are very much looking forward to welcoming our new Wrens children in on Monday.

Miss Hartland continues to be Robin's teacher. Mrs Bull will be working across both Robins and Wrens. Mrs Whitehead has enjoyed getting to know her Hawks Class this week and Miss Brown is with the Kingfishers. In KS2, Mrs Blackhurst and Miss Smith are the learning assistants. Mrs Williams will continue to work throughout the school, taking PPA lessons for all classes. Mrs Webb is at school 2 days per week and as well as providing in class support, she is also our Pastoral Lead.

Beginning on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> September, we will also have 2 student teachers in school. Mr Kelly will be working in Hawks class and Miss Allwood-Shook will be working with Robins class.

If you need to know anything, Mrs Brown is the fountain of all knowledge in the office. You will also see Mrs Desborough, our Executive Head, around as she continues to provide extra capacity for leadership at the school and across our West Village Partnership. Also working across the partnership is our new SENCo, Mrs Hannah Mooring. Liz Simpkin continues to be the Chair of Governors. The Governing Body is one board for the three schools within the West Village Partnership, so the governors carry out visits and monitor developments across these schools. Some governors have more focus on Offord though and these are: Rebecca Washington, Nikki Mitchell, Rita Rose (who are all current parents of children here) and Helen Young, whose daughter left school a few years back but still lives in the village.

All the staff are very much looking forward to continuing to work with your children and yourselves this academic year.

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## Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

By the fact that we opened on Monday, I would assume you realise that we are not affected by RAAC Concrete.

As you will have read in the media recently, the Government has taken action around a number of schools whose construction included the use of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC). RAAC was used in the construction of buildings for around 40 years from the 1950's and there have been concerns around its life expectancy and the risk of crumbling. It has been used mainly in the construction of roofs but also in walls and floors.

Cambridgeshire County Council seemed to be on the ball with this and since July 2021, they have undertaken surveys of all 268 state funded schools in Cambridgeshire. 265 schools have been confirmed as not containing RAAC, including Offord. They are working with the 3 remaining schools to ensure the schools are safe for the children.

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## Message from the staff

The staff have also asked me to write in here that they are very thankful for the very kind gifts that they receive from their classes each Christmas and summer, but again realise that the cost of living is rising. They would much prefer this money to be spent so that your children can have these wonderful enriching experiences, or even on something at school that would benefit all the children, rather than on them.

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## Coming into school in the morning

With the new door being built in Robins class to access the EYFS/KS1 play areas each class now has their own designated entry and exit to the school building.

In the morning we would like to invite the older children to stand on the school side of the gate on the area where the 'Dance Mat' and 'target' is. The children must not play during this time though as they will be unsupervised until a staff member welcomes them into school at 8.40am.

Can I remind parents of Wrens and Robins children that the toys outside Wrens classroom should not be played with before and after school. The staff will have set up activities or the children will have tidied, as this area is an extension of the indoor space. Please do not let your child play on the climbing frame or in the playhouse either, thank you.

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## PE Days

Please can you ensure that the children have their kit in school for PE.

Wrens – Friday

Robins – Monday & Wednesday

Hawks – Monday and Friday

Kingfisher – Wednesday & Friday

We would advise that kit is brought in on a Monday and left at school all week in case we have to change things at short notice.



# Offord Primary School

## Class of 2023-24



*Wrens Class*  
*Coming soon!*



*Hawks Class*

