



Message from Ms Cooper...

Dear Families,

We have reached the end of another year. Where does the time go? So many things have taken place as the world continues to change around us. As we reflect on this past year, there are so many things to look forward to. Through all the challenges and hardships many have faced this year, I am crowning 2024 as the year of hope - hope for our future and for the things yet to come.

For me, school is all about the future, our vision, 'Igniting passion; empowering learners; transforming the future' is just that – our children within these walls are our future, therefore we must get it right. Every child has one chance and as Ken Robinson so aptly puts it, 'Childhood is not a rehearsal...'

Everything we are doing at John Rankin is about putting the children and staff at the heart, giving them the opportunities and experiences to help find what it is that truly ignites their passion. Our job is to find out what makes every child light up, what brings them joy, it is also to ensure that every adult is passionate and truly understands their 'why'. As I always say, passionate staff equal passionate children who are really engaged in learning.

So many exciting things have developed since September, and even though we say goodbye to some faces, we welcome new ones to our family. Our school community is always changing, growing and evolving – community is at the heart of John Rankin. It has been lovely seeing so many of our neighbours joining us in events, like the most recent choir concert just this week, where our children dazzled in the limelight. We also had many of the residents in from the Argyles and look forward to inviting them in to join our children for Wednesday roasts.

This term we have also introduced the Learning Ambassadors to the school – a group of children who demonstrate our school values and vision in everything they do. We had over ninety applications and over forty children who had to sit through rigorous interviews with the Year 6 school council and myself and then a further twenty who had to have a second interview for the role. We now have a final twelve who already have shown enormous courage and composure in all the tasks they have been set. A new feature is that our ambassadors will be leading our Friday celebration assemblies across the school, a chance to really develop their presentation and communication skills, something we are really looking at developing right through the school. Leaving John Rankin with the gift of communication is pivotal, which is why oracy is a key thread that weaves throughout our development plan.

In other bits of news, in the New Year we have a further six members of staff taking on the lead Forest School training to ensure we can fully embed Forest School across all year groups. Our outdoor education is essential to learning and we are so lucky that we have ten acres in which our children are able to learn, grow and thrive.

2024, the year of Hope. Hope that there are brighter days ahead; hope for healing, restoration and harmony. There are so many exciting things on the horizon and I look forward to updating our families in the new term.

Wishing you and your families a restful and warm holiday season.

Your Headteacher,

Flora

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Governing Board Bulletin...



As we look forward to the Christmas break, we can also look back on another exciting and successful year at John Rankin.

Dr Michelle Sancho, head of education for the whole of West Berkshire, toured our school this term and said: "I was impressed with the creativity I saw around the school and the children's engagement in learning. It was lovely to hear the school described as a magical place."

In the classroom, on the sports field, or on school trips into Newbury and further afield, we really can be proud of our children.

With other governors, I was invited this year to help serve Christmas dinner to more than 600 pupils – a happy, if extremely hectic, couple of hours and a reminder of the really hard work our kitchen team put in all year round. The food was delicious!

On behalf of the governing board, I'd like to thank the whole John Rankin community – teachers, teaching assistants and the rest of the staff, parents and carers, and above all the children – for making John Rankin a "magical place".

I wish you all a happy Christmas holiday and a peaceful New Year.

David Marsh, Chair of Governors

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Nursery News...



We recently celebrated Nursery rhyme week. Nursery rhymes are so important and an excellent way to develop language and literacy skills and they are so much fun! The children enjoyed exploring a variety of themed tuft spots and developing their performance skills by singing their favourite rhymes in front of the class.



Christmas is in full swing and the children have been busy creating and designing a range of wonderful things. We have been wrapping presents using junk modelling and tissue paper and designing Christmas cards. The children loved the trip to the hall to join in with the Christmas dinner.

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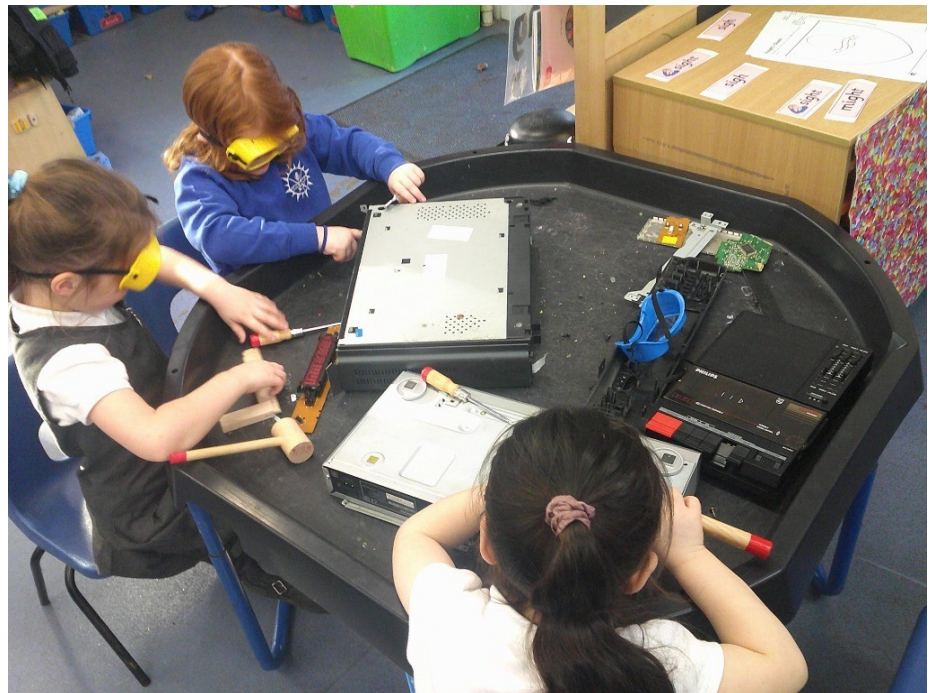
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FS2 News

In FS2 we have enjoyed exploring the big ideas 'Movers and Shakers'. We hosted a Royal Banquet and the children made sandwiches and iced cupcakes. What a feast they had and they looked fantastic in their costumes.



The Tinker table has been a popular addition to our provision where children apply their forest school knowledge of tools.



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FS2 News

They have enjoyed learning the Nativity story and engaging in provision recreating the story.



Popcorn making was a huge success. The children loved the fire and uses their sense to hear the popcorn pop and taste the cinnamon sprinkles.



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FS2 News...

Thank you to all our parents for your support with lines and costumes.

As always, FS2 performed a nativity this half term.

We hope you all enjoyed the very professional “Humpf the Camel” production. The children rehearsed very well and were super singers. It is a joy to see them shine in a different light.



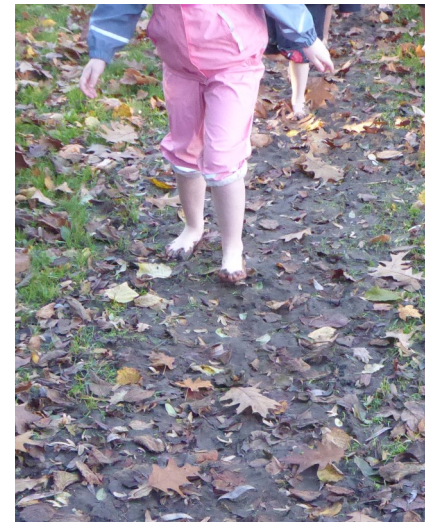
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Year 1 News...

In Science, Year 1 have been learning about their senses. What better way to continue this learning than taking a barefoot safari in Forest School?

The resilient Year 1s braved the cold weather for a very muddy walk to the secret garden to explore their sense of touch through their feet. You'll have to ask your child whether they thought this was a pleasurable sensation - it was certainly an experience they won't forget!



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Year 1 News...

Through our big idea of 'Movers and Shakers', Year 1 decided to explore the different musical instrument families. We listened to the instruments, sorted them, played them and even used our own bodies as instruments. Many children chose to put this learning into practice by designing and making musical instruments in the class construction areas as part of their purple learning challenges.



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Year 1 News...

We have been inspired by the book 'Where The Wild Things Are' this term. We thoroughly enjoyed diving deeper into the story through the drama workshop run by the Corn Exchange. In the story, Max becomes a leader of the wild things so we thought about what it would be like to be a leader of our own islands. We then designed, built and wrote about them - some excellent Imagination used!

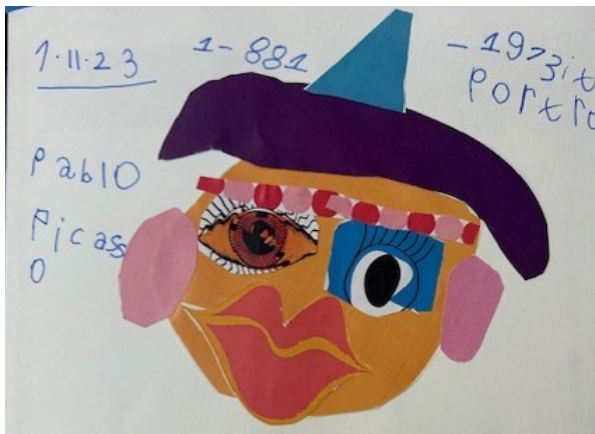


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Year 1 News...

The big idea 'Movers and shakers' made the children think about how their bodies moved and worked. We have learnt about the human body in science but in art, we focused on faces through portraits. We learned about 3 artists (Pablo Picasso, Andy Warhol and Frida Kahlo) and then used their different styles of art to create our own portraits. Wow!



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Year 1 News... Merry Christmas!

Hazel



Laurel



Holly



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Year 2 News...

The big idea 'Movers and Shakers' has sent Year 2 into learning all about Great Fire of London, and also to comparing King Charles II and King Charles III.

The children had a great time working together in their classrooms to build Tudor houses, making them look as authentic as possible. We then headed outside where, with Mr Green's help, we recreated the Great Fire of London! The children were amazed to see how quickly the houses were burned, and the ash that was left behind.



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Year 2 News...



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Year 2 News...

In Forest School, the children have enjoyed their outdoor learning opportunities. We have made Christmas decorations using natural materials, and had hot chocolate too!

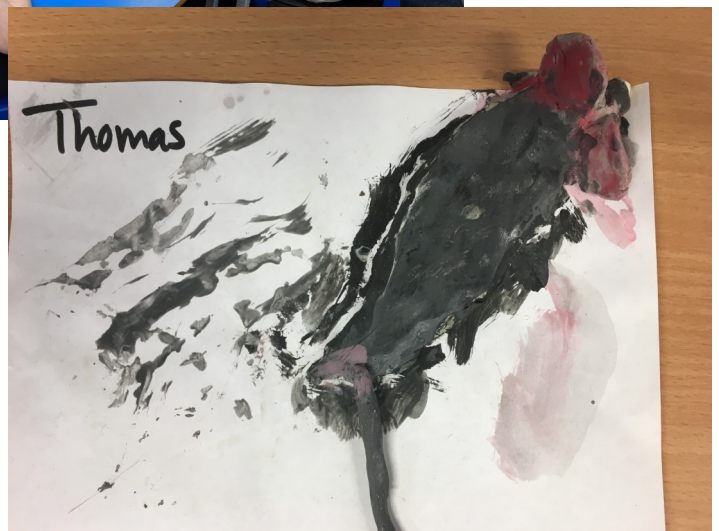


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Year 2 News...

We have been reading Vlad and the Great Fire of London for English this half term, and the children started by making an art sculpture of Boxton the Rat! We then painted them and took them home.



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Year 3 News...



History and D&T Egyptian Canopic Jars

Year 3s have been making their own canopic jars as part of our Egypt big idea. The children used a combination of mod-rock, Clay and paper mache to create the shape of the jar. We also researched the 'god heads' that the Egyptians displayed on top of the jars to protect the organs inside.



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Year 3 News...



Butser Ancient Farm School Trip

Year 3 took a trip to Butser Ancient Farm to learn more about life in the Stone Age. The children explored Stone Age homes and discovered the items they would have had inside and how they had been made. The children also got to become archeologists and excavate artifacts from the Stone Age. They discussed each item and thought about where it would have come from at the period of history it was from. They had a go at weaving with branches and how strong these are, which is useful to pen in animals and mark land boundaries.



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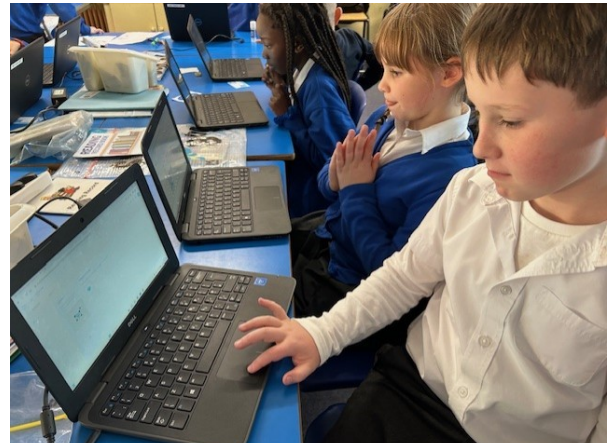
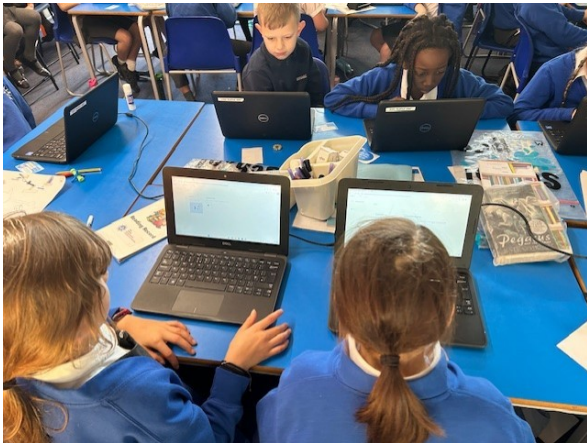
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Year 4 News...

Year 4 have had a fantastic few weeks exploring a range of topics through our 'Movers and Shakers' curriculum. We have delved into the conquests of Alexander the Great; explored how predators stay at the top of their food chains; and looked at how symbolism inspires Christians to celebrate the first ever Christmas.

The children have been learning British Sign Language to explore inclusive communication and are now able to perform a Beatles song using sign language! We were also incredibly fortunate to have Code Camp visit us as real-life Movers and Shakers. All of Year 4 were innovators for the day and coded their very own computer games!

We hope all our children have a restful holiday season and look forward to more exciting learning opportunities in 2024!



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Year 5 News...

Lime class enjoyed a visit to the Argyles nursing home. We performed our own version of Macbeth, danced to some Tudor music, sang Christmas songs and shared our adventure stories. We all had a brilliant time!



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Year 6 News...



We went to Parkway to see a real Spitfire from World War 2. There were experts there who told us about the aircraft and how they were used in the war. It was so interesting to see such an amazing machine, and to learn more about it. This linked so well to our learning last term about World War 2.

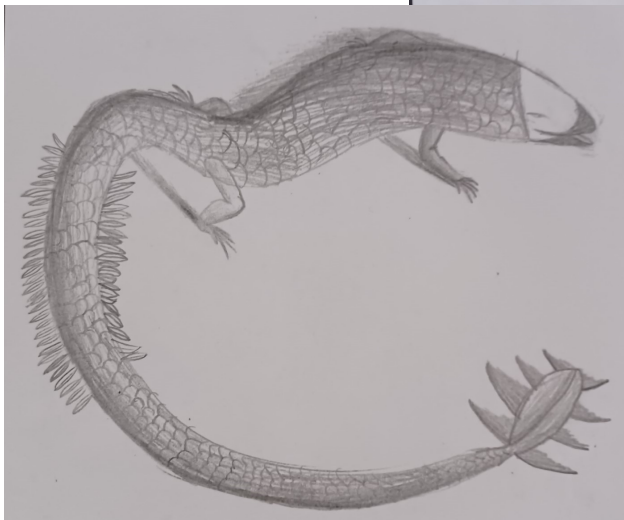
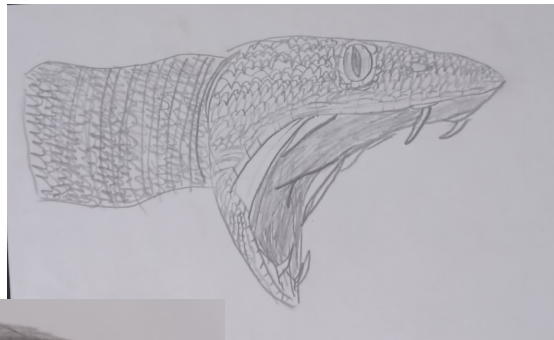
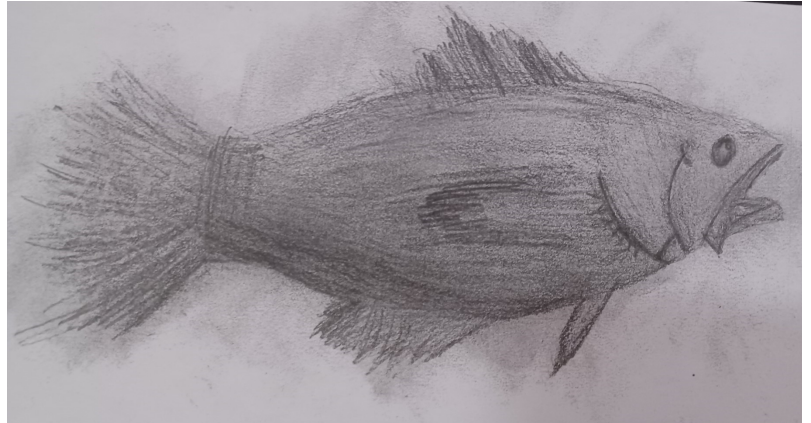
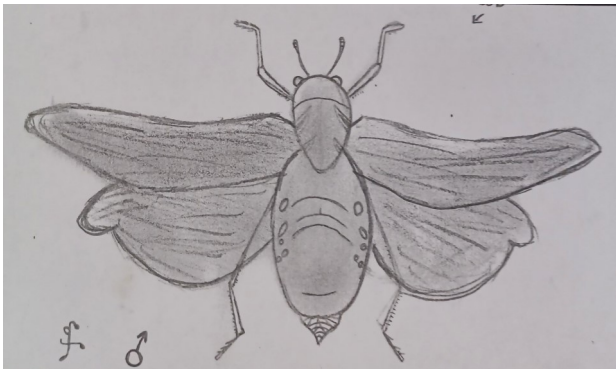


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Year 6 News...

As part of our learning about 'Movers and Shakers', Year 6 have learned about the work of Charles Darwin on evolution and adaptation. We studied his observational drawings of the animals he saw in the Galapagos, and had a go at using some of the techniques ourselves.



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Year 6 News...

Yesterday Year 6 went to the Natural History Museum in London to take part in an Evolution workshop. The children immersed themselves in learning about the Earth's history told through fossils, plants and animals.

They fully engaged in this fabulous workshop and showed the school values throughout the trip.



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Wrap Around Care

As well as providing a variety of breakfast snack options, the children at Breakfast club really enjoy playing games and doing crafts and at the Juniors, using the gym equipment and crash mats. Stacking cups however, has proved to be a firm favourite this term. The children have been setting challenges for each other to see how big or tall they can make the tower.



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Wrap Around Care



In ASC, the children similarly enjoy a variety of snacks and often get to make their own warm snacks in the make it bake it room. They also have a variety of activities they can enjoy and play workers to supervise and join in the fun with them.

A highlight for the children this term has been the Halloween party, where the staff dressed up and they had party food.

Our most recent activity was paper lantern making for the Festival of Light 2023, run by the Corn Exchange in Newbury.

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General News...

School ambassadors

This year for the first time, we have appointed school ambassadors. These children were appointed after a rigorous process which included completing an application form, getting shortlisted, and finally two interviews which were conducted by the school council. We had over 90 children apply for only 12 ambassador positions, so it was a very tough decision for our school counselors. However, they were very thorough and professional throughout the process and were delighted to appoint Tyler O, Lucia Z-B, Tilly C, Honour H, Polly G, Hania A, Samuel A-S, Alessia C, Liv H, Vibhuti S, Mollie S and Anna R.

The ambassadors have an important role within the school. They have been tasked with finding ways to encourage children to uphold the school rules, they assist with showing visitors around the school, help pupils with school performances and take whole school assemblies on a Friday.

We are very proud of everyone who applied for having the courage to do so and congratulations to the pupils who were appointed.



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A huge thank you to all of our families for your generosity of food donations for the Harvest food bank collection.



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Christmas Tree Dig

Some of our pupils from Year 1 through to Year 6 went to Yew Tree Garden Centre for our annual Christmas Tree Dig. This is an event where the children pick a tree and dig it up, ready to put up and decorate at school. Thank you once again to Yew Tree Garden Centre for your generous tree donation and thank you to our pupils for choosing such wonderful trees. Lastly, thank you to Year 1 and Year 4 pupils for decorating the trees so beautifully.



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Thank you Yew Tree Garden
Centre.

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School Christmas Lunch

On Wednesday 6th December, our children and staff enjoyed a fabulous Christmas lunch at school. The ISS team cooked up a fabulous festive feast, the tables were decorated and Christmas crackers were pulled. We hope all of the children enjoyed themselves as much as we did!



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Christmas Biscuits

Our school councilors set off again this Christmas to deliver Christmas biscuits, kindly donated by our families, to residents in our local community.

We received lots of donations of biscuits and we were overwhelmed by your generosity. The residents were both touched and thrilled with their gifts and wish to extend their thanks to our families.



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Junior Choir Performance

On the last Monday of term, our Junior choir performed the most magical and beautiful Christmas carol concert. Parents and some residents from the Argyles Care Home came to the Infant hall for some delicious cakes and to enjoy the children singing. The children worked so hard and certainly delivered a spectacular performance. Well done!



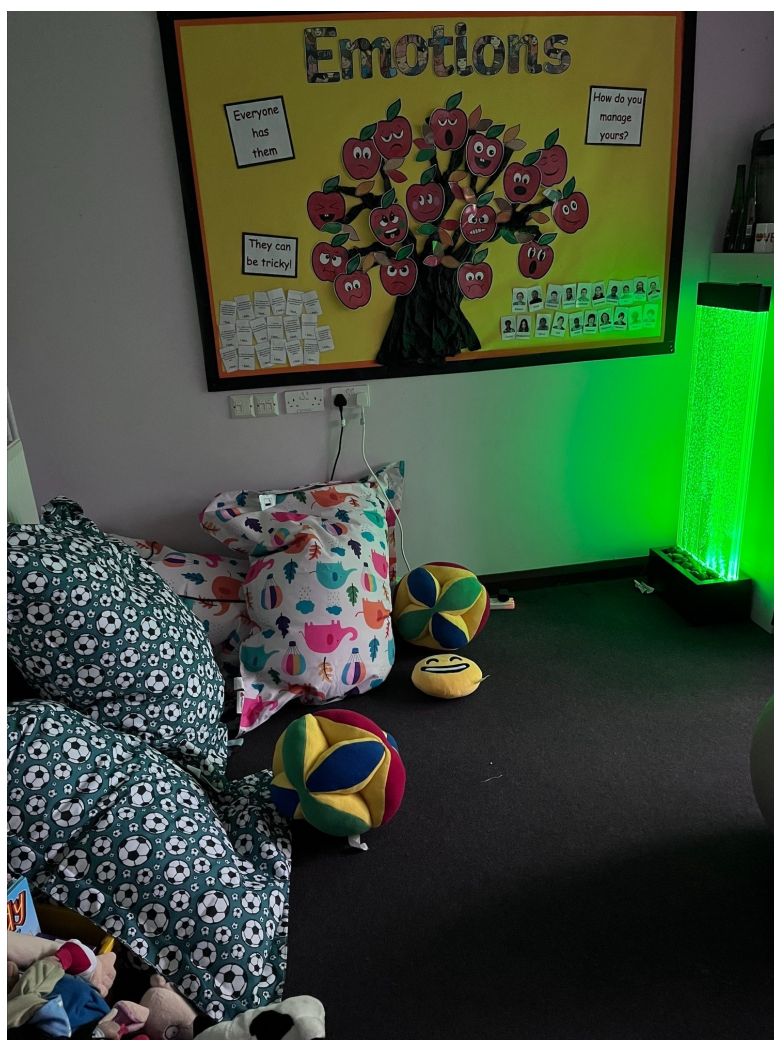
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Nurture Room

A BIG thank you....

To our wonderful PTFA who have kindly funded a refit of the Nurture Room. It is now such a lovely calming space. The children really enjoy spending time in there playing with the new sensory equipment.



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Sports News...

Its been another incredibly busy term for our sports teams with at least one event going on for every year group!

Our Year 1s and 2s took a trip to Cheam school to take part in a football festival. Both teams performed amazingly with the John Rankin whites winning 4 games and drawing 1 and the blues winning 3 games and drawing 2! Not only did they receive some really cool medals, they were treated to some tasty chicken and chips and hot chocolate after the matches too!



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Sports News...

Our 3 and 4 girls team headed up to Falkland to play in the Adnams cup. It was the first time these girls have played together and they performed amazingly, winning 5-4 and getting 3 points on the board for John Rankin. A standout performance from Emily B scoring all five of our goals!

The year 3 and 4 boys team took part in the first stages of the county cup and absolutely smashed it, topping their group and progressing to the knockout stages in the new year. Captain Odane C lead by example all afternoon!




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What is the Adnams cup?

At the start of the school year, the PE staff of the 12 schools below decided to create a new yearly competition. This was designed to allow children who don't always get a opportunity to participate in school sports a chance to play against other children of similar ability. So far we have had 3 games which have involved two different Year 3 & 4 boys teams and a 3 & 4 girls team. As you can see we sit atop the standings at Christmas! We still have 8 more matches to play in this and we look forward to giving as many people an opportunity to play as possible!

Adnams PFL 23/24 						
Team	G	W-D-L	+	-	±	P
John Rankin	3	2-1-0	20	11	9	7
St Finians	4	2-0-2	11	15	-4	6
Kintbury	3	1-1-1	14	13	1	4
Basildon	1	1-0-0	15	1	14	3
Falkland	2	1-0-1	8	5	3	3
Spurcroft	1	1-0-0	3	1	2	3
Francis Baily	3	1-0-2	7	20	-13	3
Compton	0	0-0-0	0	0	0	0
Speenhamland	0	0-0-0	0	0	0	0
Winchcombe	0	0-0-0	0	0	0	0
Hermitage	1	0-0-1	3	5	-2	0
Robert Sandilands	2	0-0-2	2	12	-10	0

Sports News...

Our Year 5 and 6 boys took part in the quarter finals of the Bill Mac cup this term and narrowly lost to Calcot. We also took two Year 5 and 6 boys team to Park House to participate in the West Berkshire Sports Network football festival. Despite the Baltic weather conditions both teams played fantastically and one of the sides came away with second place medals!

It's been a busy term for our year 5 and 6 girls footballers who have progressed to the county cup knockout stages after Christmas. They also won their indoor group stage tournament and then lost out on finals night by 1 point! Then, they had their Newbury District finals tournament with the winner heading to the Berkshire finals and unfortunately came up short against some really tough opposition. Finally, they played Downsway in the quarter finals of the Tony Mosson cup and won 3-1 with the semi final being played in 2024!

Sports News...



Our Year 5 and 6 girls showing off our brand new home kit after we received a generous grant from the Good Exchange. The Year 3 and 4 boys (pictured in white) were wearing the away kit.

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HOUSE CHAMPIONSHIP

This year we have introduced a brand new house championship. Every year group are invited to take part and so far since September the children have participated in Dodgeball, Multi sports, art and poetry. Below is a picture of our year 1s enjoying Dodgeball. The current standings are on the next page.....



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HOUSE CHAMPIONSHIP

AS THINGS STAND AFTER FOUR EVENTS....

4th with 2032 points Enborne

3rd with 2103 points Kennet

2nd with 2116 points DONNINGTON

1st with 2165 points CRAVEN