



Governing Board Bulletin...

Let me begin by welcoming all the new families to our school community here at John Rankin. The term got under way with three full reception classes, a flying start to the school year at a time when falling rolls are affecting numbers at many schools.

I hope people have had a chance to see the redecoration that has transformed many of the classrooms after Ms Cooper and her team of volunteers gave up part of their summer holidays to give them a much-needed facelift. We hope to complete the remaining areas soon.

Talking of volunteers, a big thank you to all the parents, staff, children and Newbury Friends of the Earth members who worked so hard to clear, weed, sow and plant in the school grounds at the recent Saturday morning outdoor session. We will see the results in a few months when our beautiful grounds spring back into life.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank the PTFA, who give up such a lot of their time not just to raise funds for the school but to organise so many superb events that we can all enjoy.

It's been an award-winning start to the school year. John Rankin won more categories than any other primary school at the West Berkshire School Sports Network awards in September, including the overall School Wellbeing Through Sport category. We also won a Newbury in Bloom award from Newbury Town Council.

Our Year 6 pupils have just returned from their first week-long residentials at a new venue, the Little Canada PGL activity centre on the Isle of Wight. As you can see from the photos on the school's Facebook and Instagram pages, they clearly had a wonderful time.

As chair of governors, I make a point of visiting the school at least once or twice every week. I enjoy these visits as there is always something exciting going on and so much for your governing board to be proud of.

Enjoy your half-term break and see you back in school soon.

David Marsh
Chair of Governors

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Nursery News...

The Nursery children have made a fabulous start to their John Rankin journey. They settled quickly and have been busy exploring the environment with their new friends.

We have been making use of the school grounds and recently went on the hunt for autumnal leaves. We made it rain leaves! And then collected some to use in the classroom.

We have had a lovely new playhouse donated by the PTFA and have bought some more storage cupboards for our new outdoor play blocks.



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FS2 News...

Foundation Stage 2 have started the new academic year with a bang! Our new and improved environment makes it a lovely place to be and the children have settled calmly and happily into their new classes. Our brand new, beautiful furniture arrived last week and the children are thoroughly enjoying having so much table space to make, create and explore.

In just a short time, the children have already got to grips with lots of new phonic sounds and are loving sharing their reading with us and you. They are similarly enthusiastic about our Maths Mastery sessions and readily anticipate the next appearance of the 'Numberblocks' in their learning!

We would like to thank you all for your continued support in making their journey into school life so successful and we wish you all a wonderful and relaxing half term holiday.



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Year 1 News...

Year 1 have had a fantastic start to the year. Exploring new classrooms and a new style of learning.

We have been exploring the big idea 'Brave New World' which has enabled lots of discussions about animals and exploring new worlds in vehicles.

In English we revisited different traditional stories and retold them in different ways, using our independent learning time to create resources to help us. We made puppets, masks, models, story maps and pictures to help us with our retelling.



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Year 1 News...

Animals

We learned about different types of animals and were successful in sorting them into groups.

We investigated the types of food they eat and even examined poo (made from chocolate and oats) to see if they were carnivores, herbivores or omnivores!



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Year 1 News...

We have also been learning about different types of vehicles and the historic figures that invented them. We learned about the Montgolfier brothers' hot air balloon and the Wright brothers plane. Inspired by these inventors we designed our own moving vehicles and using our knowledge of wheels and axles, we built them out of everyday materials and things from around our classrooms.



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Year 1 News...

It's been bug hunting time in Forest School.

We have spent time in the secret garden looking for bugs and exploring their habitats. We carefully used our scientific equipment to observe them closely and pick them up safely.

We also practiced our Maths skills by creating tally charts to count how many of each type of insect we found. There were a LOT of worms under the log seats round the fire pit!



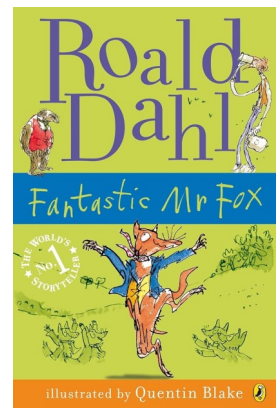
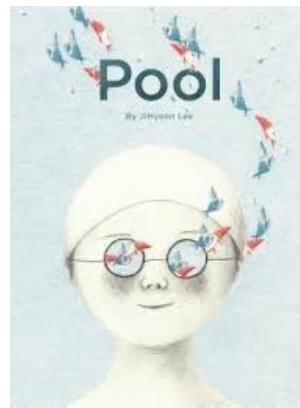
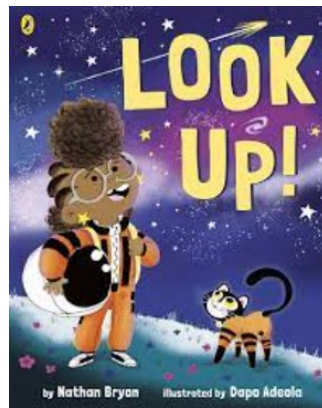
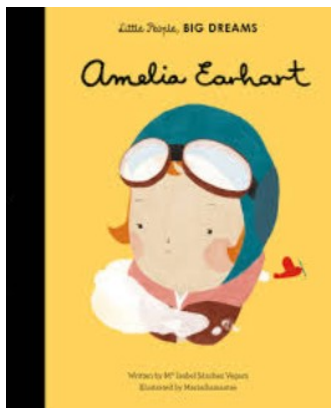
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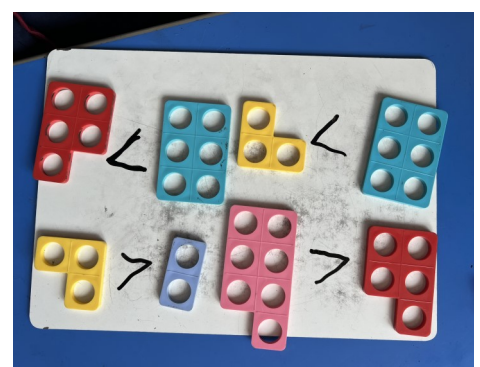
Year 2 News...

Year 2 have settled in brilliantly this term. We are incredibly proud of the way they have shown our school values of courage, composure and creativity through the embedding of our routines. They have all been fascinated with our learning about Amelia Earhart and Space, and we've loved the children sharing their books, creations and other facts they've learnt at home about the topics. Their enthusiasm has been infectious!

The books we have looked at this term are the following:



In Maths, we have been looking at place value. The children have worked hard at using place value charts, partitioning numbers, ordering numbers, and being able to use the language 'greater than, less than and equal to' to compare numbers.



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Year 2 News...

Forest School

The children have loved being outside for their Forest School sessions with Ms Lemoine this term. They have thoroughly embraced all of the opportunities to create dens, make mud faces, mud slides, practice their knots and much more! It has been lovely to see the children working together and coming up with activities independently.



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Year 2 News...

History and DT

The children have been very engaged with their learning this term in History and DT. We started the term looking at Amelia Earhart and her achievements, producing some beautiful fact files in English. We have then moved onto Space, and learning about Neil Armstrong and the moon landing. The children have been fascinated with this, and have worked collaboratively to create rockets! We mixed up all three classes, and they worked together to work out the materials they would need, the rocket parts and how they would join it together! The results were fantastic, and the children are so proud of their creations.



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Year 3 News...



Our learning about the Stone Age began in a cave! Ms Challis was hiding there ready to talk about her work as an archeologist which she studied before she joined JRS.

We learnt about the tools she used, how she went about her job and what she learnt as an archeologist.



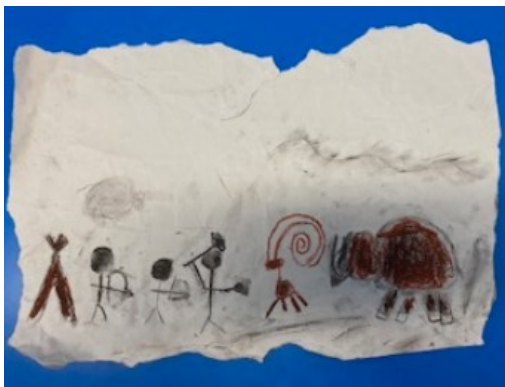
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Year 3 News...

This half term in Year 3 we have been learning about life in the stone age. We have explored what life was like for people living in the stone age including the type of music they might have made, the types of drawings and painting they created and how they survived .

In Art we have created our own stone age paintings. We found out about what the stone age people used to create art such as charcoal and then had a go at recreating this.



In D&T we designed and made our own stone age weapons. We looked and what these would have been made from and how they would have been used.



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Year 3 News...

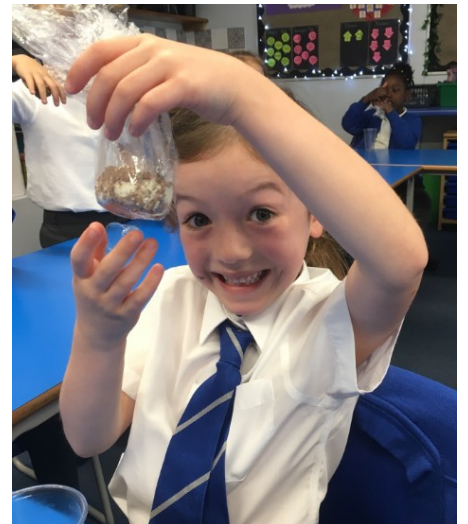
Science—Rocks and Soils

As part of our learning on rocks and soils Year 3 had the opportunity to bring in some of their rock collections from home - these were pretty impressive and we used magnifying glasses to explore these in detail.



Chocolate rocks

Some classes attempted to make sedimentary, metamorphic and igneous rock from 3 different types of chocolate—some were more successful than others but the process helped us to understand how these rocks are formed.



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Year 3 News...

Forest School

Year 3 have had a lot of fun during Forest School, with Ms Lemoine leading us through some great activities. We have loved opportunities to work as teams or independently, explore the woods and practice the art of great knot making. Whatever the weather we have had the best time learning in the great outdoors.



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Year 4 News...

We began our year thinking about how struggle is part of purple learning. We enjoyed working together to overcome challenges and earn clues to find a mystery box and crack the code to open it.



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Year 4 News...

Our first sessions to Northcroft Leisure Centre have gone swimmingly! The children have demonstrated composure, compassion and consideration and received lovely compliments on their conduct from the staff and other users of the centre.



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Year 5 News...



This term Year 5 have enjoyed writing their own space inspired poetry and have used their inspiration of the artist Peter Thorpe to collaborate and create a brilliant space themed Year 5 display.

The children have been very much enjoying the new introduction of Snack-a-Story, listening to a number of stories but also using this time to share our own Science Fiction stories.



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Year 6 News...

Year 6 had a fantastic week away in the Isle of Wight at Little Canada PGL. The adults are incredibly proud of how each child pushed their selves out their comfort zones with trying new activities and new food. What was also incredible to observe was the bond of relationships that the children built with each other and how this has transferred into the classroom since returning!

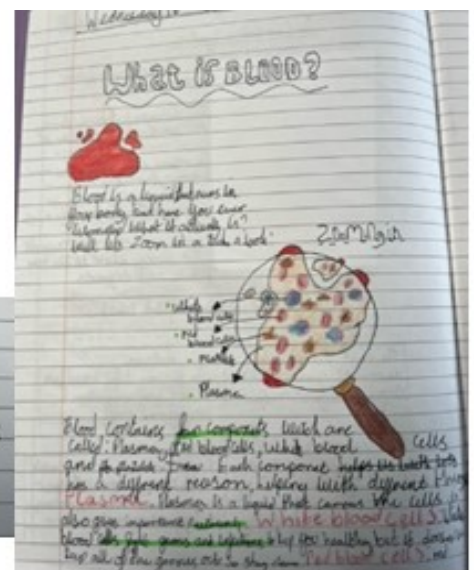
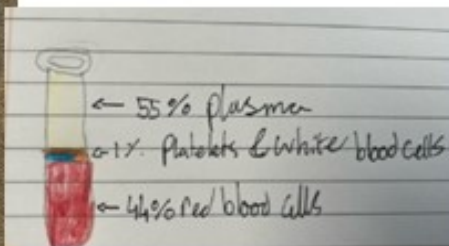
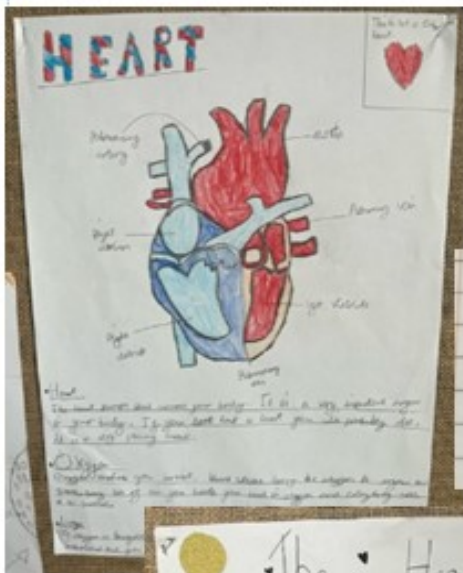


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Year 6 News...

This term in Science, we have been learning about the circulatory system. We have thoroughly enjoyed learning about how blood moves around the body and the role of the heart and blood. We have produced independent work which we are proud of in our creative responses.



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General News...

Heroes don't always wear capes!

A huge personal thank you to our all volunteers over summer half term but in particular our governors Ryan Pascoe and Graham Steer-Smith and a Mr X who came to help me with the nursery playhouse and painting. They often worked late into the evenings as did others (that I didn't get a snap of).

We would not have got so much done without you all despite the weather being constantly against us!

Still some painting/second coats to do, gents...ready when you are!

A special mention to Jason at Yesss Electrical who spent thirteen months helping me determine how/what/compatibility in terms of moving over to LED lighting across the whole site. This was a mammoth task to plan and execute but we got there in the end.

Not only did Jason give up his own time (days not hours) but he gave large discounts on the hardware needed and was on hand to help with the many snags we came across.

The school is now looking brighter and happier with our new lights!

Thank you so, so much!

Andy Green

Caretaker



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General News...

A huge thank you to Chris Thorpe and the crew at Barnfield Engineering in Newbury for a very generous gift to support our Forest School and Outside Learning.

As a parent and a big fan of the outdoors, Chris was keen to hear about what we do in Forest School and how he could help.

We have now received a fantastic set of quality tools and equipment that will really help us continue giving children outdoor education and experiences that they absolutely thrive on!

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General News...

Miss Webster took the Junior Members of the Eco Committee to the River Kennet to take part in Salmon School with experts and volunteers from ARK (Action River Kennet) and River Keeper Jimmy.

Children got to be citizen scientists, taking part in kick sampling in the river for invertebrates, making paint from soil and river water to paint river inspired art and going on a riverbank stroll.

We learnt about invasive and non-native species, held a crayfish and expanded on the plight of the Atlantic salmon with Project Thames Salmon School, led by Thames Rivers Trust. This is part of an international project, The Salmon School and John Rankin are the first school in the UK to be involved. You can see what fun they had.

Junior Eco Committee members will be sharing their new skills with infant members in some in-school sessions later in the year.

A HUGE thank you to ARK, The Wilderness and River Keeper Jimmy for a terrific day. For more information on the work ARK do, go to <https://www.riverkennet.org/>



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Sports News...



It has been an incredibly busy start to the term for our sports teams with 15 fixtures already taken place!

Our Year 1 and 2s have been busy with two football groups heading over to Cheam school to participate in a football festival. Both teams were fantastic and even got a hot dinner afterwards! We took a Year 1 and a Year 2 team to take part in a multi skills event at Park House, the event saw the two groups participate in a range of sports including: golf, archery, boccia and speed stacking. Our Year 2s came away with the silver certificates and our Year 1s got the bronze!

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Sports News...

There have been numerous football fixtures across the whole of the junior school.

Our Year 3 and 4 boys teams have won a couple of Adnams cup fixtures while one team narrowly got eliminated in the county cup group stages on goal difference.

The Year 3 and 4 girls teams beat Hermitage 10-1 in another Adnams league game while also narrowly missing out on county cup qualification.

Our Year 5 and 6 boys team have qualified for the knockout stages of the county cup and another group of boys played out a 9-9 thriller against Francis Bailey across two games!



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Sports News...

Kelly Simm Event

The children had a great day when GB athlete Kelly Simm visited the school. Everyone got to participate in a fitness circuit run by her and a GB Paralympian. They were also treated to a special assembly where Kelly explained how she made it to be able to compete at the highest level and even showed off her gold medal which the children found amazing!

Thank you to everyone who sponsored the event and thanks to your amazing efforts we raised just under £6000!!! After the Olympian fees come out, the school have been given £3000 to spend on new sports and lunchtime equipment so thank you so much!