The John Hampden School Newsletter

Issue Six Friday November 20th 2026

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It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas……

As we head towards December and the end of the Autumn Term, there is a growing sense of excitement throughout the school. This is always a special time in an infant school and we are all looking forward to the enjoyable activities and traditions that make this season so memorable for our children.

We are very much looking forward to experiencing all of the festive traditions of our school community and sharing in the joy, enthusiasm and sense of belonging that this time of year brings. This week, the rehearsals for the Foundation Stage Nativity have truly stepped up a gear, with songs, actions, and lines being polished beautifully. Behind the scenes, staff are also busy preparing for the Year One and Year Two Christmas performances, which promise to be just as magical. You should now have received letters regarding costumes. Thank you in advance for your support with these. Festive party plans are well underway too, with each year group eagerly organising their celebrations. Meanwhile, preparations for the FJH Christmas Fair are gathering pace, and we are very grateful to everyone involved for the time and enthusiasm they bring to this much-loved community event. Over the coming weeks, the school will continue to transform. Christmas decorations will begin to brighten our corridors and the sound of rehearsals and festive music will fill the air. Everywhere you look, there will be signs that Christmas is very much on its way!

Steph Parkinson - Headteacher

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For the Christmas Performances space in the hall is at a premium. Please note that you will be entering the hall up steps via a side route so please do not attempt to bring pushchairs into the school. Our pupils and staff work very hard to put on these performances and we would ask you, on this occasion, to make alternative arrangements for all younger siblings as they can find it difficult to sit still and quietly and can spoil the enjoyment for others. Your co-operation would be greatly appreciated.

The Friends of John Hampden Christmas Fair is next weekend, Saturday 28th November at 12.00pm and I am sure that will really start to make us feel festive. My thanks to all the FJH committee for demonstrating, once again, their amazing organisational skills in the run up to this event. Also thanks to all the volunteers, governors and staff who will give up their time to run stalls. We hope to raise lots of money so do come along and support us. We are hoping that any money raised by the FJH this year can be used to purchase new resources for all year groups. This would make a huge difference to the opportunities we offer. We are incredibly lucky to have such an active FJH and we truly do appreciate the time and effort that so many volunteer committee members provide. Many of them are already very busy people and the staff, governors and pupils at the school would just like to say a really big THANK YOU for all their hard work.



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Christmas parties are planned for **Friday 18th December**. We invite the children to come to school wearing party clothes/Christmas jumpers and suitable footwear on that day (the children will be going outside at playtimes so clothing needs to be appropriate for colder weather). We will be asking you to provide your child with their own Christmas party packed lunch on this day rather than the hot meal option and, as this is a special occasion, we are happy for them to have any food which you consider to be appropriate e.g. sweets, chocolate etc. Each year we are amazed by the wonderful lunches that are provided. Lunchboxes are often specially decorated, some even contain particularly Christmassy items. (The FJH provide every child with a Christmas Cracker to enjoy at the party) If we are lucky, a very special visitor may arrive carrying a big sack of presents!



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Christmas Cards

As we head towards December we find many pupils wish to send Christmas cards to their friends in the school. We accommodate this by installing two Christmas post boxes which will be in position from Monday 1st December. One is positioned in the Foundation Stage Octagon area and the other one, for Key Stage One pupils, is positioned near the school office. If your child would like to send some cards this year please would you check the envelopes to ensure the cards can be easily sorted and distributed.

Each envelope needs to have the name and class name of the recipient clearly written on it. Unfortunately we are not able to provide parents with class lists, but I am sure your child will remember the names of their very close friends.

We will encourage all children who bring cards into school to post them in the post boxes because the children are always very excited when the Christmas Post arrives in their classroom. Regular deliveries are made in the days leading up to the end of term. **LAST POSTING DAY IS WEDNESDAY 16th DECEMBER** and final deliveries will be made on Thursday 18th December.

The following information may help you with envelope writing!

Foundation Stage	Year 1	Year 2
Caterpillars – Miss Burns	Squirrels—Mrs Bloxham & Miss Bell	Firecrests – Mrs Nelson/Mrs Mannering
Ladybirds– Miss Fox	Hedgehogs – Mrs Norman/Mrs Burrows	Herons – Mrs Lemming
Honeybees— Mrs Shrimpton	Badgers—Mrs Henderson and Miss Berry	Red Kites – Miss Tiffin



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Adverse Weather Conditions

Some parts of the country have been treated to a flurry of snow. The colder weather is now truly upon us. With that in mind, we wanted to take the opportunity to remind families of our winter weather procedures.

If we need to close the school this winter due to adverse weather conditions the following procedures will be used to inform parents.

1. A decision will be made about the school closure by 7.30am. This decision will be based on health and safety grounds, which may include not having enough staff at school to supervise our pupils.
2. By 7.45a.m the school website home page will be updated with closure details. Greatest Hits Radio will have been contacted and should announce our school closure at regular intervals throughout the morning. The Council's website will also list our school closure: www.buckscc.gov.uk
3. If the notices listed above have not been implemented then you are to assume the school will remain open.
4. With these three methods of communication in place, there should be no need for you to telephone the school asking whether we will be open or closed.
5. Should the school open but need to close earlier than 3.15p.m, we will contact you via the website or telephone.



Please be assured that school closure will always be a last resort.

It is entirely the responsibility of the parent/carer to decide whether it is safe to travel to and from school in inclement weather and we respect the choices you make. As usual please inform the school by telephone or in writing if your child will be absent from school.

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Pupils Section:

On Thursday 12th November we held another Open Morning at the school in preparation for a new intake of pupils in September 2027 . Twelve of our Year 2 pupils acted as ambassadors for the school and we thought you might like to hear what they said to their audience when we asked them what they would like to share about The John Hampden School.



Ruby - John Hampden is fabulous because everyday we learn new things.
Oscar - John Hampden is brilliant because you make new friends.
Joseph - John Hampden is great and I love all of the classrooms to learn in.
Hallie - I love the John Hampden and am excited about doing Art.
Oliver - At John Hampden school you are always cared for.
Elijah- John Hampden is the very best because we have After School Club.
Esme - John Hampden is the best school in the world with the best teachers.
Jack - Every day is a good day at John Hampden because the teachers care for us and teach u
Edith -The John Hampden is amazing and I love English.
Sofia - At The John Hampden we learn more and more each day.
Tilly - It is amazing at The John Hampden because we all love to learn.
Noah - John Hampden is the best school with the best teachers.

We were so very proud of our ambassadors!

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Governor Section

My name is Ann Whytewood-Sitzberger, and I have the absolute pleasure of serving as a governor at John Hampden.

My journey with John Hampden began a little over eight years ago when I joined as a parent governor. This is now my second time experiencing the John Hampden journey as a parent, as my son previously attended the school and has since moved on to secondary school.

More recently, my daughter started in Crickets this September, and I am delighted to say that she absolutely loves it! I must admit, I did have a few reservations about sending her to a school nursery this year. Being an August 31st baby, she is one of the youngest in her cohort, having narrowly missed the cut-off for the following academic year. However, I can honestly say that my reservations were very quickly put to rest. She has settled beautifully, is thoroughly enjoying her time in Crickets and, although she comes home rather tired, it is lovely to see how much she is learning and developing.

Crickets really is an outstanding provision. The environment has been thoughtfully designed, with engaging activities and opportunities for children to explore, discover and learn. Miss Hall and the wonderful Crickets team skilfully balance child-initiated play with adult-led learning experiences, ensuring that the children are supported, challenged and encouraged every step of the way.

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Governor Section

The expectations for the children are wonderfully high, even at this early stage. It is lovely to hear our little ones already talking about the importance of collaboration, perseverance and using their manners, to name just a few of the values that are embedded in their everyday learning.

There are currently 21 children attending Crickets, with a maximum capacity of 26 places. If you are considering nursery provision for your little one, I would warmly encourage you to consider Crickets. As both a parent and a governor, I feel incredibly fortunate to have experienced the school from both perspectives, and it has been wonderful to see my daughter begin her own John Hampden journey.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming Christmas Fair and Christmas performances. I am particularly looking forward to seeing our Crickets take to the stage!

Warmest wishes,
Ann Whytewood-Sitzberger
School Governor and Crickets Parent



Curriculum Section

Online Safety

Today's children have grown up surrounded by technology. They are confident online from a very young age — and while this brings exciting opportunities, it can also feel worrying for parents who didn't experience the digital world as children themselves.

At John Hampden, we want every child to become confident, capable and responsible online. We teach digital literacy skills that will support them in their learning now and in their future lives. Just as importantly, we work closely with you to help children understand how to keep themselves safe online.

Online Safety is a key focus throughout our Computing curriculum. Alongside termly assemblies and the use of stories to reinforce key messages, children are reminded at the beginning of every weekly Computing lesson how to stay safe online. We talk about safe use both in school and at home, where children may not always have the same protections in place.

Last week, all pupils attended age-appropriate e-safety assemblies led by Mrs Shrimpton. These covered important themes such as knowing who to talk to if something online makes them feel uncomfortable, treating others kindly both online and face-to-face, avoiding contact with strangers, and for Year 2, an introduction to the idea of a digital footprint.

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Curriculum Section

Online Safety

We recognise that even our very youngest pupils are increasingly using a range of different, internet connected technology at home, so to support you, we thought it might be helpful to direct you to some useful, age appropriate websites.
www.thinkuknow.co.uk - this is split into different age ranges to give relevant information for each age group. You can visit the Parent/Carer section for advice, or the 4-7 child section to share animated stories and games with your children.

A good site for Early years resources would be www.childnet.com
This has some great picture books (Digiduck) for parents to read with children. These can be downloaded as pdf or read on the website, they also have some great advice pages.

Get SMART | Childnet – visit the 'Know It All' Section for an interactive guide about online safety.

www.childline.org.uk

https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/



Mrs Shrimpton (Computing Lead)

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Curriculum Section

Online Safety

The messaging app Snapchat is the most widely-used platform for online grooming (NSPCC Nov 2024)

1 in 15 children aged 8-15 have broadcast themselves live on popular social media sites. (Childnet, 2017)

79% of 5-7s go online for around 9 hours per week. (Ofcom, 2017)

26% of 6-year olds use the web for social media. (Opinion Leader, 2016)

73% of 8-12s have shared a photo online. (UK Safer Internet Centre, 2016)

1 in 6 of all 8-11s play games against people they have not met in person (Ofcom 2017)

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Friday 27th November is mufti day where children can come to school in their own clothes in return for a donation:

- Jam Jars
- Gifts for 'Wrap a present'
- Christmas jumpers
- Bottles for the tombola
- Toys for the tombola
- Cakes and biscuits



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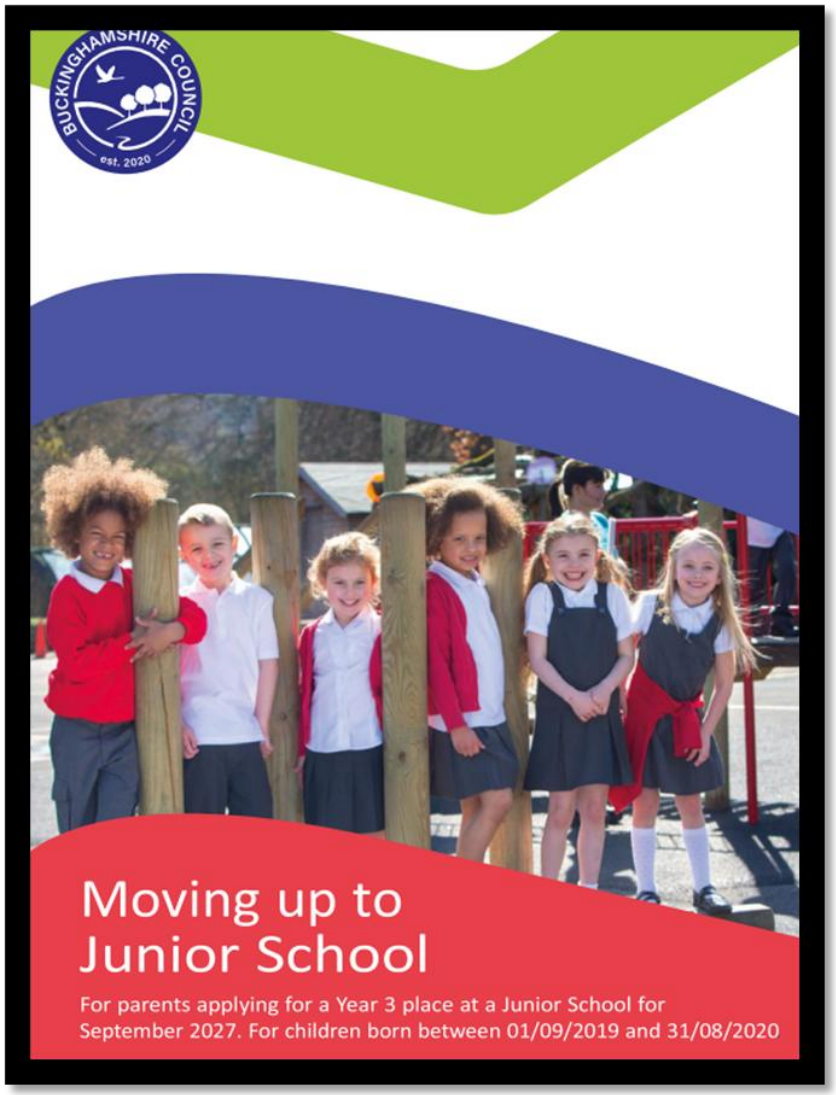
Starting School in September 2027





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Diary Dates – Autumn Term

25th November – Open Morning for prospective EYFS (Nursery and FS) parents
1st December - FS dress rehearsal
2nd December –9.30 am FS Nativity
3rd December - 9.30 am FS Nativity
4th December – INSET day
8th December – 9.30 am EY Nativity
14th December – Dress Rehearsal Christmas Performances Year 2 9.30am Year 1 11.00am
15th December - Christmas Performances Year 2 9.30am Year 1 2.00pm
16th December - Christmas Performances Year 1 9.30am Year 2 2.00pm
18th December – Christmas Parties and finish school at 1.00pm

