



Weekly Newsletter: 9th January 2026

Dear Parents/Carers,

Happy New Year! I hope that you and your family had a wonderful festive period and that many happy memories were created.

The return to school this week was made even more exciting by the dusting of the snow which covered the school on Tuesday. The children were really sensible and we managed to get outside to enjoy it in the winter sunshine.

As I walked around the building on Tuesday, it was wonderful to hear all of the chat about Christmas presents, days out with family and who had been allowed to stay up to watch the fireworks. It is always lovely to hear the chat about presents as it is not always the biggest or most expensive gift which the children are excited to tell their friends about. It is often a smaller one which they were really surprised by but meant that they could spend time with a friend or relative playing or creating something.

This week, I received a document from Dame Rachel De Souza, the Children's Commissioner, entitled '*What I wish my parents or carers knew...': A guide for parents and carers on managing children's digital lives*'. The document can be found [here](#) and provides excellent advice on supporting children and young people in the digital world. It also gives useful information about the current popular apps and how to approach conversations with your child regarding their technology use. I thought that this was a very appropriate document to share as I am sure that there will have been a few devices delivered from Father Christmas.

Next Thursday (15th January) is our School Census day – this is an important day for the school as it dictates our budget for next year. It is also important for our school dinners too. On Census day, Sarah and Jo (in the kitchen) will be opening a Pizzeria and the children can choose from a ham and pineapple or margherita pizza (Sarah also hinted that there may be a little bit of Chocolate Crunch going too!). The more meals that are served will increase the amount of funding which is designated to the school. So please, if possible, encourage your children to have a school meal on Thursday – remember Reception and Year 1 and 2 are entitled to a Universal Free School Meal, so there will be no charge to the parents.



I hope that you have a fantastic weekend (and stay warm!)

Kind regards
Jonathan Gray
Headteacher

House Points

| Willow | Cedar | Oak | Lime |
|--------|-------|-----|------|
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

(the counting starts next week!)

Parking on Lambert Drive

I know the cold weather and return to school after the holidays may have played havoc with morning routines, but unfortunately we have had a number of complaints from local residents on Lambert Drive about cars being parked across driveways and dropped curbs. Last term, when we were visited by a Parking Enforcement Officer, he was very impressed with the parking around the school at the end of the day. Please could you take the same courteous approach in the mornings to ensure that our neighbours can still leave for work on time and go about their daily activities without being blocked in.



No Outsiders

Next Tuesday, the children will be taking part in this term's 'No Outsiders' morning. The children will be looking at the following books:

| Class | No Outsiders Book |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Caterpillars (Reception) | Hello, Hello |
| Leopards (Y1) | Want to play trucks? |
| Pandas (Y2) | The Great Big Book of Families |
| Llamas (Y3) | The Bad Seed |
| Orcas (Y4) | Red: A Crayon's Story |
| Penguins (Y5) | Mixed |
| Wolves (Y6) | Leaf |

Unused Toiletries Wanted

At Christmas, sometimes we are gifted toiletries (e.g. shower gels, face creams etc) which do not agree with our skin or aren't our preferred scent. Rev. Faith runs The Pantry in Great Waldingfield, which is a resource to support local residents, and would appreciate any donations of **unused** toiletries, which could go to a new home and be used (rather than collecting dust at the back of the bathroom cupboard or going in the bin). There will be a collection box in the office foyer for any donations.



PE Days for Spring

This half term, there will be a change to some of the PE days as we welcome our Hannah and the coaches, from Rivers Gymnastics, back to Acton. Please see the table below for any changes (highlighted):

| Class | PE Days |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Reception (Caterpillars) | Tuesday and Friday |
| Year 1 (Leopards) | Tuesday and Friday |
| Year 2 (Pandas) | Monday and Wednesday |
| Year 3 (Llamas) | Tuesday and Thursday |
| Year 4 (Orcas) | Tuesday and Wednesday |
| Year 5 (Penguins) | Monday and Wednesday |
| Year 6 (Wolves) | Monday and Wednesday |

Spring Term Dates

- Cedar House Cake Sale : Friday 23rd January
- Y2 Trip to Braintree Museum: Thursday 29th January
- Y4 Trip to Colchester Castle: Friday 30th January
- Parents/Carers Evenings: Wednesday 11th February and Thursday 12th February
- FOAS Palentines Disco: Friday 13th February
- Half-term: Monday 16th February to Friday 20th February
- Children return to school: Monday 23rd February
- World Book Day: Thursday 6th March
- FOAS Easter Bake Off: Friday 20th March
- Easter Holidays: Monday 30th March to Friday 10th April

Details about events and trips to be shared nearer the time.



Stars of the Week!



| Class | Strive | Support | Succeed |
|--------------|--------|----------|---------|
| Caterpillars | Blake | Ada | Juno |
| Leopards | Tilly | Hudson | Reya |
| Pandas | Jacob | Arabella | Phoebe |
| Llamas | Althea | Patrick | James B |

| | | | |
|----------|-------|---------|--------------------------------------|
| Orcas | Zara | Dexter | Alice |
| Penguins | Caleb | Daisy B | Oscar K (nominated by Mrs Fisher) |
| Wolves | Jack | Freya | Charlie |

Class News

Caterpillars

What a busy week back! The children have enjoyed sharing their exciting Christmas holiday news, trying really hard to use their phonic knowledge to write some simple sentences. In Drawing Club, we have enjoyed sharing the story 'Star in a Jar'. The children have worked hard drawing and writing about the characters and the setting of the story. In Phonics, we have learnt the digraphs ai, ee and oa, as well as the trigraph igh. Our Maths focus has continued with the theme of Alive in 5, and we have been playing lots of games, comparing numbers to 5 and the composition of the numbers 4 and 5. This week, we have set the Caterpillars two challenges; Challenge 1 is to learn to zip their coat up independently and Challenge 2 is to start walking down from the top gate in the morning. It has been fantastic to see some of the Caterpillars already completing both of these challenges. Well done!

Leopards

We have had a busy first few days back at school. In English, we read and discussed a variety of traditional tales and, in Maths, we concluded our learning about shape. In RE, we revisited the Jewish belief of a mitzvah (good deed). We then thought about the mitzvot (good deeds) we could do to take care of the world and those who live in it. Our ideas included putting rubbish in the bin, not cutting down lots of trees and thanking farmers for their hard work. Next week, we will focus on sequencing and writing correctly punctuated sentences. We will also learn to use the conjunction 'and'. In Maths, we will begin our Place Value to 20 unit, and in Phonics, we will review and consolidate several sounds.

Pandas

It was lovely to see the embarrassment of Pandas back and ready for 2026! I hope that you all had a lovely Christmas and new year, and were able to get some rest in amongst all of the festivities. The children were full of news on Tuesday and clearly had a wonderful time with you all. This week, we have been busy starting our new topic all about the Victorians. In History, we recapped our learning from Year 1 about Queen Victoria and we even remembered a little bit about Florence Nightingale. We began to explore life in a Victorian school in preparation for our school trip in a few weeks time. There were lots of rules to follow and it seemed very strict, especially for those who are left handed! In English, we began reading 'Oliver Twist' in connection with our History topic. We discussed workhouses and the conditions in London which Oliver would have faced. We have been descriptively writing, as well as answering some comprehension questions about the book. Talking of reading, many of the children have hugely improved their Accelerated Reader scores this time and are beginning to read with greater fluency, which is fantastic. Also this week, we practised rolls and jumps in gymnastics; learnt about compassion towards animals and the Islamic story of 'The Crying Camel' in R.E; discussed keeping safe with medicines in PSHE; and learnt a new song about rainbows and what they are symbols for in Music.

Llamas

What an amazing first week of 2026 the Llamas have had! Our whole class has come back with fantastic learning behaviour and it was lovely to hear all about their Christmas break. This week, we have started our new topic - Ancient Egypt! This will be our History focus for this half term and it also pairs with our English. In History, we learnt who the Ancient Egyptians were, a little bit about their beliefs and why the river Nile was so important to them. In English, we began reading Ma'at's Feather, an adventure story about a boy named Qen based in the Ancient Egyptian period, and created a storyboard of the first two chapters. In Maths, we have been focusing on our 3 and 4 times tables This has included learning how to work out a missing number question

and even questions like 12×40 ! We also discovered how we can use our 3s to learn our 6 times tables, and our 4s to learn our 8 times tables. We finished our Wednesday afternoon with PSHE, discussing safe and unsafe situations. Lots of us realised that some situations could be deemed safe if we have an adult with us for example (going to the park, crossing a road etc.) but could also be unsafe if we were on our own. You've worked super hard this week Llamas and long may it continue!

Orcas

It may have been a short week, but we have had a lovely first few days back in Orca Class. We dived straight back into our English learning and began by drawing a room in our house like an architect. We then wrote a paragraph describing this room as though we were estate agents, which everyone did a fantastic job of! We also learnt about glossaries and created our own, as non-chronological reports often include these at the end of the book. In Maths, we have been working on our written methods of multiplication, looking at both short and long multiplication. This is quite tricky, so we will be spending a little more time on this next week. In exciting news, we started my favourite History topic of the year – the Romans! We have begun by discussing what we already know and are looking forward to learning much more next week, especially as we prepare for our trip at the end of January. In PSHE, we started a new topic on risks and keeping safe, and, in French, we are learning how to tell the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears... in French! Finally, in PE, we began basketball with Dan. Please remember to bring gloves next Wednesday for this. Well done, Year 4, for returning to school so wonderfully and working so hard this week!

Penguins

The Penguins are continuing to flourish during the winter months! In History this week, we have started a new (and rather gory) topic about Crime and Punishment through the ages by comparing modern crime and punishment with the Roman times, including fingerprinting and learning about the Twelve Tables. In English this week, we have started our unit on playscripts by studying *War Game*, by Michael Foreman. We worked hard to plan out the key events, characters and vocabulary, so that we were able to draft scripts with clear stage directions and speaking parts. In Maths, we practised the critical skill of creating equivalent fractions using the fraction strips to help us understand proportionality. In PE, we worked on our collaborative skills when playing Battleships as part of our Outdoor and Adventurous Activities unit. In Music with Mrs Fisher, we learned "Freedom is Coming" - a South African pop song - and, in PSHE, we discussed bullying and the similarities and differences with cyberbullying. In RE with Mrs Fisher, we started to study the Hindu concept of moksha (by eating biscuits!) and, in French, we spoke about our homes.

Wolves

Welcome back and Happy New Year. It has been lovely being back with the Wolf Pack this week and a new year, means many new topics across all of the subjects. In English, we began our new book- *Wild Boy*- which is a story about a boy covered in hair who lives in a circus. So far, we have been introduced to some rather unsavoury characters and are looking forward to finding out what happens next. In our Maths lessons, we were introduced to the new topic of percentages as well as re-capping some of our previous learning on fractions. Our new History topic is the Industrial Revolution. We completed a cold task demonstrating our prior knowledge of aspects like trade, industry and inventions, as well as looking at what it would have been like for children working in factories and the horrific conditions they would have been exposed to. In PE with Coach Dan, we began our netball unit by practising the different passes. And finally, with Mrs Fisher, we began our new RE unit on Hinduism by discussing the paths to Moksha and we discussed ways to keep safe in PSHE.



[@actonprimary](https://www.instagram.com/actonprimary)

Community Events



LEGO
EVENT!

Sunday 1st February 2026
LONG MELFORD SCOUT & GUIDE HUT
Open 10am - 4pm

£2 ENTRY FOR ADULTS **50p ENTRY FOR CHILDREN**

Raising Money for
1st LONG MELFORD BROWNIES

Support and Advice

School's Early Help Webpage

A range of websites and sources of advice on Emotional Wellbeing, Health, Sleep and Parenting Support can be found [here](#).

Free NHS Virtual workshops – Supporting Young People's Mental Health

These free virtual workshops (Zoom) are designed to provide up to date advice and guidance on how parents and carers can support the young people in their life. The workshops are 60 minutes long.

To book onto a workshop visit nsft.uk/workshops or scan the QR code



There are also a number of NHS podcasts and webinars available on YouTube, these can be accessed anytime via <https://www.youtube.com/@NSFT>



Click the image or visit <https://www.sudburycab.org.uk/>