

Barn Owls - January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas break and managed to enjoy some well-earned rest amongst the celebrations. We also want to say a heartfelt thank you for the thoughtful gifts— we were truly touched by your kindness.

The children settled brilliantly last term and it has been lovely to see how confidently they've grown into the routines and expectations of Barn Owls. They are already thriving, and I'm really excited to see how much more they will achieve as we move through the year together.

This letter outlines what we'll be focusing on this term, along with any updates you may need to know. As always, if you ever have a question or would like to talk something through, you're very welcome to catch us on the playground at the end of the day or pop a note in your child's reading record.

Literacy

Reception

This term, the children will continue to grow in confidence as communicators and early writers. Through a wide range of stories, poems and rhymes, they will learn new vocabulary, describe characters and settings and join in with familiar phrases. We will be encouraging them to talk about stories in more detail, make simple predictions, and even create their own endings as their understanding deepens.

In reading, the children will take part in guided reading sessions three times a week and continue to build their phonics knowledge through Little Wandle. They will practise recognising sounds, blending to read words linked to their phonics phase and answering simple questions to show their understanding. They will also begin to distinguish between fiction and non-fiction as they explore a variety of books based on their interests.

In writing, the children will have lots of opportunities to write for real purposes — from shopping lists to menus and tickets — as well as creating both fiction and non-fiction pieces. They will work on forming early writing shapes and letters, developing a secure pencil grip and writing their own name independently. As their confidence grows, they will begin to spell simple words using the sounds they know and write short sentences with increasing independence.

Year 1

This term, the children will continue to develop their confidence as independent writers. They will be practising how to write a series of simple sentences that make sense, using **and** to link their ideas and applying full stops and capital letters consistently. We will also be focusing on forming letters correctly, leaving clear finger spaces and segmenting words into the sounds they have been taught.

In reading, the children will be encouraged to read their phonics books with growing fluency, moving away from overt sounding out as their confidence builds. They will learn to tackle unfamiliar words by using their phonics sounds and they will answer questions by finding key information within a text. We will also practise reading with expression.

Maths

Reception - The areas will we cover this term include:

Alive in 5- manipulating numbers up to 5.

Mass and Capacity

Growing 6, 7 and 8

Length, height and time

Building 9 and 10

Explore 3-D shapes

Year 1 - The areas will we cover this term include

Place value within 20

Addition and subtraction within 20

Place Value within 50

Length and height

Mass and Volume

How you can help at home

The best way to support is by hearing your child read at least 3 times a week and reading aloud to them. Research has shown this makes a huge difference in how well children go on to do later in school.

It is important that your Year One child can confidently use mental addition and subtraction to recite number bond facts to 10 and 20. The following website has some great games to develop children's skills using number bonds and beyond plus a range of games to develop multiplication skills. The children can develop confidence using this and then you can challenge them with quick fire questions, such as, what do I add to 5 to make 17 or tell me a number bond to 20 in 5 seconds. These skills are fundamental to the depth of understanding that children in Key Stage One should develop. It would be extremely beneficial if your child can practice regularly at home. Do have fun with it.

<https://www.topmarks.co.uk/maths-games/hit-the-button>

PE

Just a reminder that PE lessons this term will take place on Tuesday mornings. On Friday afternoon, Barn Owls will do gymnastics for the first half of the term and then Forest school which involves lots of physical activities for the second half of term. Please ensure that your child has their correct PE. kit in school for these days. Children may wear a tracksuit for PE in the cold weather.

Just a reminder that PE lessons this term will take place on **Tuesday mornings (Spring 1 is PE on a Friday afternoon and Spring 2 (after half term) will be Forest School)**. Please ensure that your child has their correct P.E. kit in school for these days. Children may wear a tracksuit for PE in the cold weather.

Mr Smith will continue to teach PE on Tuesday mornings. Mrs Payne will continue to teach Barn Owls RE on Tuesday mornings and English and maths on Tuesday afternoons.

Spring term curriculum at a glance	
History (1 st ½ term)	Nelson Mandela
PSHE	Dreams and Goals (1 st half term) Healthy Me (2 nd half term)
RE	What is the good news Jesus brings? What does the Torah mean for Jewish people?
Science	Animal safari
DT	Cookery day (1 st half term) Forest school (2 nd half term)
PE	Multi-skills
Geography (2 nd ½ term)	Kenya
Art	Patterns in buildings Puppets
Computing	Programming – Pictograms Robot algorithms (bee bots)

Home learning Year 1 only

Mathletics will be set each Tuesday for completion the following Monday and literacy homework on the same day, literacy homework will be set every two weeks related to the books we are reading in school or topic work via foundation subjects. This will be set via email or sometimes sent home as paper homework in book bags.

Children will bring new **spellings** home on a Monday and these need to be returned the following Monday with spellings practised ready for their test. Please ensure your child practises their spellings in their spelling book **3 times** and Year Two children write sentences out to contain some of the words. Year one children, please choose three words from your spelling list and write out sentences with these words. This helps children to practise the basics of using capital letters, finger spaces and full stops regularly. Spelling sentences completed in a favourite colour pen or in rainbow colours are accepted 😊

New reading books

We are very excited to share that we now have a brand-new set of Little Wandle fluency books for the children to enjoy at home. Mrs Youngman has worked incredibly hard to organise and colour-code them so that each child can take home a book that matches their reading level. Two books will be sent home every Monday and should be returned the following Monday. Each loan will be recorded and we won't be able to issue a new book until the previous one has been brought back. Unfortunately, a number of books have gone missing over time, which means our collection becomes harder to maintain. We would really appreciate your support in helping the children take good care of these valuable resources and we would also like to thank the PTA for generously funding them.

As a school, we also take part in a weekly reading competition based on children reading at least three times a week and handing in their completed reading record on a Monday. We haven't won since the autumn term, so it would be wonderful to see our class climbing the leaderboard again. Your encouragement at home makes a huge difference

Reading volunteers

We were fortunate enough to have some volunteers who came into school once a week last term to listen to children read. If you can volunteer one morning from 8.45 – 9.15 a.m or one afternoon 2.45 – 3.15p.m ever week, please come and speak to us. We would be thrilled to welcome you to Barn Owls. The children benefit from regular reading and love to see a visitor rather than listening to us all the time!

Some final reminders

Please provide your child with a clear named drinks bottle to use as they are actively encouraged to have a drink throughout the day. The children are very good at filling up their water bottles again when empty and this helps develop independent life skills. Please bring appropriate clothing for the weather and remember gloves on

elastic threaded through coats does stop them getting lost! We would be most grateful if gloves and hats are clearly named to help quick identification. Do encourage your child to practise zipping up their own coats and putting on gloves themselves. We will also be encouraging children to collect their own items at the end of each day, again increasing independent life skills.

We've noticed that scarves can sometimes cause problems in school, as they are often misused during play, so we kindly ask that children avoid wearing them where possible.

Needed items - yes please!

If you are able to contribute any shared resources such as pencils, glue sticks, whiteboard pens, paper or additional writing tools for our writing table, craft materials or tissues, we would be very grateful. These items are used daily in Barn Owls and tend to run out quickly, so any extra supplies are always appreciated.

Thank you for all the support you gave last term — from homework, helping with trips, to the many ways you help your children at home, it truly makes a difference. As we move into the spring term, we're excited to continue working together. This point in the year is always special, as we see the children growing in courage, kindness and respect, and we can't wait to watch them continue to flourish.

Kind regards,

Mrs Beaumont, Mrs Barker, Mrs Venn and Mrs Wronka