



St Hilda's School
HARPENDEN
Caring, Curious & Confident

NEWSLETTER

Friday 12th December 2025 No. 138

*Small wonder the star,
small wonder the light,
the angels in chorus,
the shepherds in fright;
but stable and manger
for God -
no small wonder!*

*Small wonder the kings,
small wonder they bore
the gold and the incense,
the myrrh, to adore;
but God gives his life
on a cross -
no small wonder!*

*Small wonder the love,
small wonder the grace,
the power, the glory,
the light of his face;
but all to redeem
my poor heart -
no small wonder!*



Dear Parents,

We have reached the end of a busy and successful term, concluded as always with a rousing service of carols, Christmas music and the telling of the story of a baby born in lowly circumstances. I hope you enjoy reading the words of the pieces in the order of service, this year I thought these especially stood out as summing up the real meaning of Christmas. I hope that everyone finds time over the Christmas break to think upon this amazing event.

It is time for me to say farewell for a short time, as from today I will be away on sabbatical, until the end of February half term. I will really miss everyone in our busy school community which is such a big part of my life. I hope to return refreshed and ready for renewed challenge and endeavour. Something special we read in the Bible relates to Jewish custom when people say goodbye for a time. Often this was when long and perhaps long journeys had to be undertaken. The word used between family and friends was the Hebrew word 'Mizpeh', that God would watch between whilst they were absent from one another, and give His blessing to that time apart by being a watchful presence over those kept apart, and that one day they would reunite. I send my very best wishes to Mrs Comer and all of the team who run our wonderful school and assure you all that I will be thinking of you in my absence, and trust that the coming weeks will be happy and productive ones.

I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and every happiness for 2026. I hope you enjoy this newsletter which gives a flavour of all that has been going in during this busy term.

With my warmest regards
Dan Sayers
Headmaster

PUFFINS (PRE – NURSERY)

The Puffins have had a great first term in their new Early Years environment learning through play with child initiated and adult led learning experiences.



They have enjoyed 'Forest School' sessions exploring the bank and learning about nature and have had lots of fun making their teachers 'food' in the mud kitchen!



At the end of the term the children were really brave and performed their Christmas songs to their parents alongside their friends from Kittiwakes. The Early Years teachers were so proud of them performing in front of such a big audience. To end the term the children enjoyed a Christmas party with lots of games and a lovely Christmas lunch.

KITTIWAKES (NURSERY)



The Kittiwakes class have had a super first term at St Hilda's Nursery and arrived back after half-term well settled and ready to learn and play.

In our Autumn topic we enjoyed an artistic Welly Walk. We learnt all about the artist Andy Goldsworthy and the beautiful art he makes using natural resources. We collected lots of different items on our Welly Walk, including

pinecones, red, yellow, brown, and green leaves, sticks, buds, feathers, conkers and conker shells, and lots more. Once on the field we worked in groups to make this lovely artwork:



This half-term we spent time thinking about others who are less fortunate than ourselves and we had a special Children in Need Day enjoying all things Pudsey! We enjoyed lots of exciting craft activities and then enjoyed a 25 Challenge Welly Walk with all the Early Years classes completing a circuit of 25 actions, including star jumps, spins, hops, jumps, etc. Gosh we were exhausted but felt proud of ourselves for helping others.



We had our first local outing walking to the local post box to post our letters to Santa. We hope he likes the polite way that we have asked for a gift and loves our super writing.

Finally, the term finished with our Christmas song show to our parents and our Christmas party. We all dressed up in Christmas clothes and sang our hearts out at the show. Our



teachers were so proud of us!



RECEPTION



Reception have had a fun packed term settling into the life of full-time school. We have learnt so much since arriving in September. We are growing in independence every day. We can look after our belongings, do our own zips and are such a helpful class. In Literacy we have learnt to recognise and say all our sounds, we are learning how to form them correctly in handwriting and are all beginning to blend these sounds to read words and stories.

In Maths we have great fun exploring numbers and the value of a number. We have found that there are so many ways to make a number. We have been exploring shapes and enjoyed a fun shape hunt around the school. Triangles were the hardest shape to find!



We have also been busy being creative both in and out of the classroom. At Forest School we hunted for different types and shapes of leaves and hunted for hedgehogs in the leaf piles. We love playing with a variety of construction sets to make imaginative places and objects together. We finished the term by dressing up and forming the Nativity scene in the end of term Nativity service with the older girls.



FORM I

Form One have enjoyed a super first term together.

We have been working hard as a team to get to know each other, strengthen our friendships and develop our perseverance and resilience!

In English, we have been working so hard in phonics, reading and writing. We enjoyed reading and writing lots of traditional Fairy Tales and alternative Fairy Tales and celebrated our topic by dressing up as a Fairy Tale character, even writing and acting in our own traditional tale!

In Maths, we have been focusing on numbers 0 - 20, comparing, adding, subtracting and manipulating amounts. In History, we focused on our families and homes, building family trees and looking at homes through the ages, including castles. We then moved onto finding out more about why we celebrate Guy Fawkes Night and why Christians celebrate Christmas.

In Science, we learnt about our bodies, naming parts and functions. We used our super scientific topic to label our main features, bones and organs. We then moved onto animals and categorizing animals by names, diet and habitats. We even made animal poo to show whether the animals were herbivores, carnivores or omnivores! We loved visiting Hertfordshire Zoo, taking part in both an Animal Classification workshop and Mini Meet session with the Gibbons with Becky, the Zookeeper.

In Art, we focused on colour mixing using primary colours, as well as collage using paper. We made amazing face collages and then studied our own houses and made super house collages.

In the last week of term, we invited our families into the classroom to look at all of our lovely displays and work. Phew! What a busy term. We can't wait for more learning and fun in Form One in the New Year.



FORM II

We have had a super first term in FII and have settled into the top year of the Juniors with ease.



In English we have completed a topic on 'Superheroes' and loved inventing our own heroes and sidekicks. We gave our heroes outfits for saving the world in and some amazing super powers! Our vocabulary improved as we learnt all about adjectives and we really enjoyed reading about Aisha, a superhero princess. We had a fantastic Superheroes Day in October. The girls did not have to wear their school uniform but came dressed as a Superhero. They brought a soft toy to be their sidekick. During the day, they made a superhero cape for their helper and used teamwork to solve lots of superhero problems.

In History, we have learnt all about Florence Nightingale. We were fascinated by her life and the changes she made to the nursing profession. We were quite stunned at the divide between the rich and poor during Victorian times and were aghast at the thought that women were not meant to go out to work and should stay at home and learn how to sew and cook!



We had a great Florence Nightingale Day in November and everyone looked fabulous dressed in their Victorian nurse costumes. Many activities were on offer, such as making a timeline of Florence's life, making a Victorian Cup and Ball toy, practising bandaging and taking part in department lessons, balancing books on our heads! We rounded off the day with an afternoon tea fit for Queen Victoria, complete with cucumber sandwiches and jam tarts.



FORM III

Form III have had a fantastic start to their time at St. Hilda's this term!

In our English lessons we have learnt about different cultures and festivals through poetry and we performed our own version of a poem called 'Carnival' by Valerie Bloom. We also enjoyed learning about the story of Rama and Sita from different versions of the story and creating our own summary.

In Maths we have loved learning our times tables and seeing the patterns they create. We have used various methods to help us including dice games, multiplication squares and games on the interactive whiteboard.



In History lessons the girls have been learning about the Ancient Egyptians. We were lucky enough to experience a workshop at school where we made canopic jars from clay, created our own mummies and wrote using hieroglyphics on papyrus.



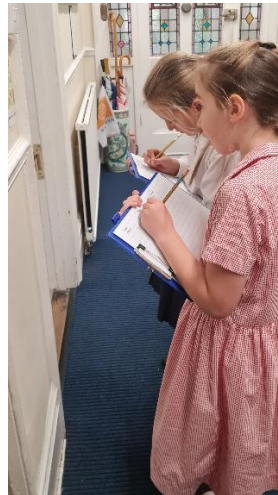
FORM IV

In Humanities, we have been learning about Egypt. We have been investigating the continent of Africa and the specific geography of Egypt including the River Nile. We had a special Ancient Egyptian day where the children were transported back to the time of the pharaohs and learnt what life was like under the rule of Pharaoh Akhenaten, a controversial ruler known for his religious revolution.



The children looked fabulous in their outfits, dressed as Ancient Egyptians, Gods and Goddesses. They spent the morning making canopic jars, embalming, and creating offerings to take to the temple as offerings to the Gods. During the afternoon, it was time to entertain the Pharaoh and Queen with some dancing, acting and storytelling. Luckily, the Pharaoh enjoyed hearing about the Tale of the Wax Crocodile and spared everyone's life!

In Science, we had lots of fun learning about teeth and eating. We carried out an experiment into which drinks were the healthiest for our teeth, looked at different types of teeth and investigated the skulls of different animals and researched their diets.



We always like to be learning in an active way in Form IV and so have been on lots of Maths and English hunts and trails around school. The children have been working very hard in English and thoroughly enjoyed reading *The Twits* by Roald Dahl. They wrote some great descriptions and persuasive adverts as well as some brilliant playscripts. In PSHE, Form IV have been discovering more about democracy and rights and responsibilities. They created their own class charter, coming up with ideas relating to the UN Conventions for the Right of the Child.



FORM V



It's hard to believe how quickly this first term has flown by and what a successful start it has been – all the girls in FV have settled into their new routines brilliantly. They have shown a fantastic attitude to learning and have been working very hard across all areas of the curriculum - from sporting success in PE to **making kites in Forest School** and currently having great fun **creating their own stop-motion animations**, showing impressive creativity and collaboration. We were especially proud of them singing so beautifully at the Harpenden Peace Service, representing the school with confidence and kindness.

Another highlight was their excitement at finally meeting their Nursery buddies! They love spending time together and had a wonderful time sharing Christmas stories, showing how caring and responsible the Form V girls are.



We are very proud of everything they have achieved so far this year and look forward to an exciting term ahead when they return from the holidays.



FORM VI

Form VI have risen to the challenge of being top of the school and all that the Autumn Term brings with it. Determined and courageous, they have undertaken assessments and entrance exams with confidence and we are very proud of each and every girl for working so hard. Roles of Responsibility have been dutifully carried out and we have seen much kindness and encouragement of each other.



The girls have taken part in a plethora of extra-curricular activities such as sporting fixtures, choir, orchestra, STEM, Authorfy, languages events and a wide range of clubs. It is wonderful to see them succeeding in a range of ways not just academically. Keep letting us know about your achievements – we love to celebrate with you!



We hope you all have a well-deserved rest and wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2026!

ART

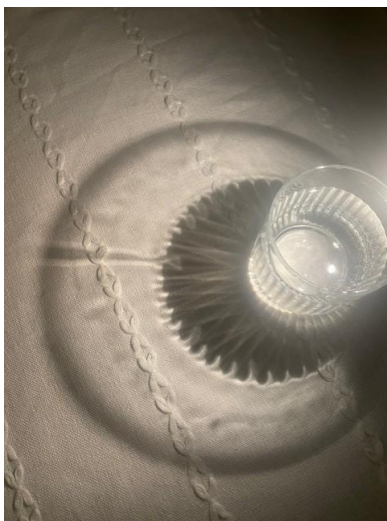
It feels as though this term has flown past so quickly. Our entries to the ISA London North Art competition enjoyed success and recognition. Luna the snake (*left*), was our most successful entry, securing first place in the 3D Group category at the Regional Art competition.



Also successful was the Form VI Leavers' Quilt, (*middle*) a textiles art piece which came Second in the Textiles Group category, and Misha Shankar whose sketchbook pages were Highly Commended.

Isabelle Hutt (Current Form V) did extremely well with her entry 'A den in the woods' (*right*) which was awarded 2nd place in the ISA 2D Art category, and which also won Second Prize in the **CPRE Hertfordshire Children's Art Competition: My Adventures in the Countryside**. You can see Isabelle's work here on the CPRE website; <https://www.cpreherts.org.uk/news/2025-childrens-art-competition-results/> Well done everyone!

The entries to this year's **photography competition** have been very interesting, and it was lovely to see some joint entries from students and entries from parents and the staff. The theme, set this year by our fabulous Art Captain, Talia Teschmacher, was 'Shadow' which proved to be wonderfully inspirational to all. A selection of entries is below.



Violet Bunker, Form VI.



Grace Sayers, Form IV, Beach Huts.

SPORTS

This term has been busier than ever, with many opportunities for the girls to compete in netball, hockey, football, cross-country and swimming. The girls have enjoyed representing the school, playing together in a team, and embracing every challenge.



From Nursery through to Form VI, everyone has enjoyed sport on the court (complete with our new floodlights!) and field, and made great progress. We started the year with the Daily Mile for the whole school and finished with a triangular tournament for U11 netball teams at Berkhamsted.

Our netball teams have had a successful season so far, playing fixtures against Abbot's Hill, St Columba's, Sherradswood, STAHS, Berkhamsted and Haberdashers', and so far our U9, U10 and U11 A teams are undefeated.

In cross-country, our U10 team came 2nd overall in the District Cross-Country and Lizzie qualified for the ISA

National Championships, which take place next term. In the ISA Swimming Nationals held at the Olympic pool, Imogen came 3rd in backstroke and 6th in butterfly, with PBs in both.

Our U9, U10 and U11 football teams have played against other schools and taken part in local tournaments. Our U9 hockey team competed in the ISA hockey festival at Akeley Wood. Our ski team came 2nd in the National ISA ski championships held in September, and Reva, Maisie and Siena have been selected for the ESSKIA English Alpine Ski Squad.



Well done to all our girls on their hard work, commitment and sporting spirit, and thank you to parents for all your support, encouragement and help with transport.



PERFORMING ARTS

It has been a wonderfully busy and vibrant term in Performing Arts. The girls began the year by preparing for the Peace Day Service, setting a reflective and thoughtful tone for the weeks ahead. This was quickly followed by our joyful Harvest Festival, where pupils shared music, readings, and performances to mark the season of gratitude. We also took a moment to reflect during our Remembrance Assembly, with moving songs and readings offered by the pupils.

Across the term, one-to-one music lessons have been in full swing, with students learning 16 different instruments. An impressive 55 girls have been working towards their next LAMDA examinations, in Acting and Poetry, demonstrating dedication, confidence, and enthusiasm for performance.

In Drama, Year 6 have been exploring *Macbeth*, engaging deeply with Shakespeare's language and themes. They created a fantastic soliloquy video, now shared on our social media platforms. Meanwhile, Year 5 have been developing their skills in character creation,



experimenting with voice, physicality, and imaginative storytelling. Lower down the school, Forms 3 and 4 have been discovering different performance styles and staging techniques, learning how theatre communicates mood, meaning, and creativity in a variety of ways. **Form I** have had a wonderful introduction to Drama at St Hilda's, enjoying storytelling, playful exploration and growing in confidence as they take their first steps on their drama journey.

Meanwhile, **Form II** have continued to develop their drama skills, focusing on how to structure a performance by working on clear beginnings, middles, and endings.



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The Senior School put on sell-out Winter Concerts last week, showcasing exceptional musicianship from every corner of the department. The String Group, Recorder Consort, School Orchestra, Choir, Showtime Singers, and Wind Band all delivered performances of remarkable energy and skill.

Class performances were a highlight of the evening. Forms III and IV charmed the audience as rhythm-loving teddy bears, while Form V took us on a lively musical journey around the world as enthusiastic train drivers and conductors. Form VI closed the show with a humorous and imaginative presentation exploring a trip to Blackpool and the world of sport. Throughout the concerts, our talented narrators—Talía, Siena, and Arielle—guided us beautifully through the magical world of the St Hilda's Toy Box.

This has been a full, vibrant, and inspiring term in Performing Arts—and next term promises to be just as exciting. We are already looking forward to the much-anticipated Form VI Production in March, as well as the LAMDA examinations taking place just before half term. The term will also feature the ever-popular and spirited House Music Competition, a highlight for performers and audiences alike.



“God bless us, every one!” — Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*

FOSH

The curtain came down on an extremely busy end of term for FoSH with our Panto trip to the EMC on Wednesday morning. The K-Pop infused performance of Jack and The Beanstalk was thoroughly enjoyed by pupils, staff and parents alike with this new event format being a huge success.



Last Friday we also held our ever-popular Secret Gift Room which the girls had a wonderful time at. Thank you to our team of wrappers and personal shoppers for your help.

Neither of above events would have been as memorable as they were without Tammie Modi spearheading them. If anyone deserves a restful Christmas break, it is you !



Looking into 2026, FoSH have an exciting calendar of events scheduled for the Spring Term:

Thursday 5th February – Winter Disco

23rd – 27th February – New/Used Book Collection

First week of March (date tbc) – Book Exchange as part of World Book Day

Friday 20th March – Quiz Night

Tuesday 24th March – Easter Activity Day

Please also note Saturday 20th June in your diaries for our Summer get-together - see Save the Date attached. Full details of 'Midsummer at The Manor' will be provided next term, it promises to be an incredible end of year send off !



Coming Up...

Term Dates 2025 - 2026

Spring 2026	
Term Begins	Monday 5 th January 2026
Inset Day	Friday 13 th February 2025 – No pupils in school
Half Term	Monday 16 th February – Friday 20 th February 2026
Term Ends	Friday 27 th March 2026

Summer 2026	
Term Begins	Tuesday 21 st April 2026
Half Term	Monday 25 th May – Friday 28 th May 2026
Term Ends	Friday 10 th July 2026