

**A lovely letter**

Last week I was delighted to receive this letter from Damian Hinds, Minister for Schools and had a very 'proud headteacher moment' reading that our incredible phonics results put us in the top 4% of schools in the UK. It is so lovely that everyone's hard work has been validated in this way so please, enjoy!



**Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP**  
Minister for Schools

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Mrs Louisa Hillman  
Ide Hill Church of England Primary School  
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08 January 2024

I am writing to congratulate you on your school's outstanding achievement in the 2023 Phonics Screening Check.

We want to ensure every child develops a firm grasp of phonics as the basis on which to improve standards of reading. As such I was delighted to see your results.

With 96 per cent of pupils in Year 1 at Ide Hill Church of England Primary School meeting the expected standard in the check, your school is in the top 4 per cent of all primary schools in the country.

The latest figures show that 83 per cent of pupils who met the expected standard in the check went on to achieve at least the expected standard in reading at key stage 2 in 2023, which underlines the importance of developing the ability to decode words effectively at an early age.

Your particular success in teaching phonics and early reading so effectively means your pupils are developing a firm foundation, from which they can become increasingly fluent and develop a lifelong love of reading.

I would like to thank you for your commitment and success in this vital area of a child's early education and congratulate you, your staff and pupils again on all you have achieved.

Yours sincerely,

**Damian Hinds**  
Minister for Schools

**Y6 visit to Bore Place**

On Wednesday, Oaks visited Bore Place for the first of three visits this year. We were incredibly grateful to Bore Place who came to school to collect us and dropped us back in their amazing minibus.

When we arrived, we split into groups and learned about balanced diets and what one is comprised of. Afterwards, we learned about processed food and ultra-processed and the differences between them. We learned that processed food isn't always bad, for instance, if you roasted and blended a squash (

As we did for our flapjacks) then this would technically be processed. Ultra-processed foods tend to have preservatives and other additional things added.



After that, we went on a tour of the farm, seeing the wildlife that lives there as well as seeing where the vegetables are grown for their 'market garden'.

Once we had returned indoors, we followed the recipe carefully to make flapjacks containing squash that had been harvested previously at Bore Place. As they cooked, we ate our lunch and prepared for a journey to the milking parlour and to see the livestock that produces over 5000l of milk a day at Bore Place.



Inside the parlour, we were shown the equipment used to milk the cows and were even fortunate enough to meet three pregnant heifers (females) and a whole barn of calves.



To finish the day, we cut our cooled flapjacks and even got to eat them!

Many thanks to Bore Place and to our leader, Ali, who made our day so enjoyable!  
Oaks Class

### School Council

This week the children have been thinking about the six principles of nurture. Mrs Daniels talked to the children in celebration worship last week about the first principle so that they could have a good discussion when the children met for school council.

The theme this week was: **Children's Learning is understood developmentally.** In order to help children understand that learning is developmental we enlisted the support of year 6, who used the meeting to teach the children some origami. All children in KS1 made a lantern and children in KS2 made a butterfly. Initially they tried to make one on their own, without instructions. They were then shown how to make it, using step by step instructions. We used this experience to prompt some discussion about how we each learn differently.

The children said...

*I found it tricky at the start but when I kept on trying, I did it!*

*I had to be patient with myself. It took me a bit longer to get right.*

*I was resilient and didn't give up*

*I learnt at a different speed to my friend. I was slower but we were both able to make it and we were both proud of what we had made.*

### Why is this important?

When we learn we build upon blocks of knowledge and skills that we have previously learnt. We do not all learn in the same way or at the same speed so even though our friends in the same class might be the same age as us, it does not mean that they are at the same stage as us in their learning. Why? Because learning is developmental. Mastering something isn't just a step, it's a whole staircase. Some of us might be standing on different steps, some might be at the bottom glancing up and some may have stumbled

midway, but we are all heading towards the same goal and we can all be successful.

### Please can you help?

There are a few things that we would like to add to our KS1 playground and the outdoor areas. Please let us know if you are able to help us to source the following:

#### Small wooden or plastic cable drums



#### Small log slices (small enough for children to lift so 30cm wide or so)

#### Plastic milk crates



#### Large catering tins

#### Milk caps



#### Good quality pallets (plastic or hardwood)

If you are able to help, please contact the school office.

News from St Mary's, Sundridge  
with Ide Hill & Toys Hill, PCC



**Forest Church (7<sup>th</sup> January 2024)**

Forest Church celebrated Epiphany on a very chilly Sunday afternoon. We thought about the people who visited the baby Jesus and the gifts that they brought. Jane brought along some frankincense, which is an aromatic resin, and myrrh. We had chocolate gold coins too that seemed to disappear rather too quickly!

For our craft session, which was held in the kitchen of the hall out of the howling wind, we decorated star-shaped lolly sticks and chucked a message of blessing on small blackboards.



Traditionally on the feast of Epiphany, Catholics bless their homes by writing the letters C, M and B and the numbers of the year in chalk at the top of their doors. The letters stand for the three Kings, Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar – or for the Latin blessing, Christus mansionem benedicat which means ‘May Christ bless this house’.



**Upcoming Church Dates:**

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February 3pm at Court Lodge Farm TN16 1NU.** Go up Hogtrough Lane from Brasted to Pilgrims Way. Turn right onto Pilgrims Way and after 200 m turn right again into a working farmyard. We will have a short visit of about 30 minutes to see the cows - so wear wellies and suitable clothing. There is no loo, so sorry but there will be no liquid refreshment although possibly some ice cream from the dairy! Visit is at your own risk.

**Mothing Sunday March 10<sup>th</sup> 10.30 at Ide Hill Church.** We will be outside thinking about who cares for us and preparing posies.

**Palm Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> March 10.15 at Ide Hill.** Meet Pedro the donkey at Ide Hill School ready to process up to the church. Forest Church will follow in the churchyard.

**Easter Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> March 6.30 am at Ide Hill for the Sunrise!!!!** Meet in the churchyard around a fire pit to greet the dawn and find the first Easter eggs of the day!

All are welcome whatever your age, however noisy or wriggly! Please wear suitable outdoor clothing.

For more details please contact:  
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Upcoming School Dates for Your Diary	
31 <sup>st</sup> January	Rev. Lynette visiting Saplings
29 <sup>th</sup> January	Young Voices at the O2
6 <sup>th</sup> February	Safer Internet Day 2024
9 <sup>th</sup> February	End of term

<p><b>Happy Birthday!</b></p>	<p>William C Harry R Aria N</p>
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<b>Saplings</b>	<p><b>Ezra M</b> - You are working very hard to recognise and write your sounds! Well done for persevering! Keep it up!</p> <p><b>Jack W</b> - For your enthusiasm to learn and to share your ideas with us in Saplings. It's important to be curious and ask questions!</p> <p><b>Juliette</b> - We love seeing your confidence growing in class! You always apply yourself. Well done!</p>
<b>Elms</b>	<p><b>Finn</b> - For your excellent addition in maths this week. You worked hard to understand something that was tricky and it paid off, as you got them all right!</p> <p><b>Luca</b> - For remembering to include all the different things on our writing checklist. You remembered capital letters, full stops, finger spaces, adjectives and you used 'and' to extend your sentences!</p> <p><b>Flora</b> - For really working hard in maths, which is really paying off as you have completed some really tricky work recently. Keep it up!</p>
<b>Beech</b>	<p><b>Eva</b> - For super descriptive writing about a polar bear!</p> <p><b>James</b> - For excellent understanding of money, finding the total amount.</p>
<b>Willows</b>	<p><b>Phoebe</b> - For having some interesting ideas about how to make pneumatic systems work in DT.</p> <p><b>Hanna</b> - For her enthusiasm and lovely comments in her reading diary about her books. You can tell that she is enjoying what she is reads.</p>
<b>Hazel</b>	<p><b>Toby</b> - For his excellent use of speech in his story sequel and for always trying his best.</p> <p><b>Aryssa</b> - For her incredible perseverance and use of resources to support her progress in Maths. Well done!</p>
<b>Ash</b>	<p><b>Zach</b> - For always bringing a positive vibe to the class and his insightful contributions to class discussions.</p> <p><b>Ferin</b> - For her cheery disposition and her perseverance towards finding a solution for any challenge she may face.</p>
<b>Oaks</b>	<p><b>Robyn</b> - For her excellent knowledge of how farming works at Bore Place.</p> <p><b>Ronnie</b> - For his perseverance when drawing angles.</p>