

## THE PALMER ACADEMY

# Half term Newsletter 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you to all parents and carers for their support this half term with their child's learning, attending parent meetings or attending the workshops put on by the school.

This half term, children across the school have enjoyed a rich and varied learning journey. Reception have been busy retelling stories, creating story maps and exploring early number and measurement skills. Year 1 have thrown themselves into a wide range of subjects, from writing about *The Gruffalo* and exploring plants and trees in Science, to learning about Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale, experimenting with printmaking in Art, and developing their musical sense of tempo. Year 4 have taken an exciting geographical adventure through Spain, deepening their understanding of Valencia's culture through a special partnership with Reading Museum. Year 6 have shown exceptional enthusiasm, enjoying *Oh Maya Gods*, producing impressive diary writing inspired by *Letters from the Lighthouse*, and preparing for persuasive writing next term. Across the school, children have demonstrated curiosity, creativity and hard work—well done to all for a brilliant half term!

Have a safe and wonderful half term break, see you on Monday 23rd February.

Kind regards,



**Miss A Higginbotham**  
Headteacher



# Nursery

This term we have welcomed lots of new children and their families into Nursery. The children, 'old' and 'new', have enjoyed getting to know each other and making new friends.



Our topic this term has been 'Once upon a time' and we have enjoyed listening to and retelling the stories of The Gingerbread Man, Little Red Riding Hood and The Three Billy Goats Gruff. We also made stick puppets of the characters and settings so that we could act out the stories with our friends.



We were very lucky to take part in some sessions with a storyteller where the children loved exploring the characters in Little Red Riding Hood.



In maths we have been recognising, counting and ordering numbers, using positional language and exploring patterns in the environment and of our own making.



The children have really enjoyed all aspects of their learning, both inside and outside where we have been digging for worms, painting with mud and making sandcastles.



We are all looking forward to next term when we will be welcoming some more new additions to Nursery . . .



Thank you for your continued support!

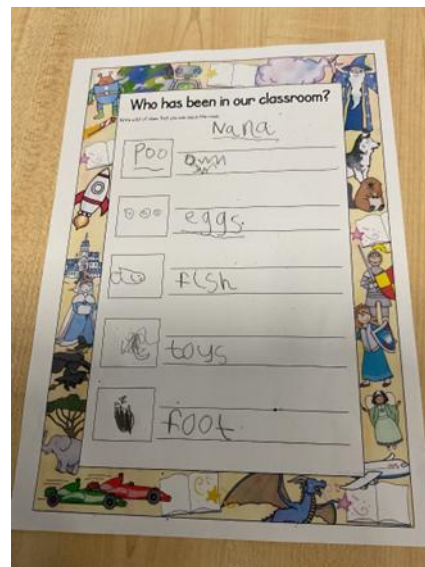
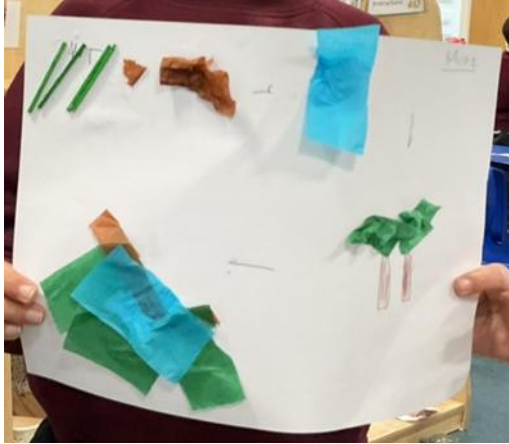
# Reception

This term we have been focusing on our class authors. We have learnt the stories The Tiger who came to Tea, We are going on a Bear Hunt, Goldilocks and the Three Crocodiles and Mog.

On the first day back after the Christmas break, the children came back to find the classrooms were a mess. We used magnifying glasses to help us look for clues and decide which story characters had made a mess. The children decided that it was Mog, a tiger and a bear. We then spent some time writing a list of clues that we saw.



We have spent a lot of time learning to retell the stories by heart and as part of our challenges we have been writing sentences about the stories and making maps to show where the characters went.



In Maths this term we have been learning to find one more and less than a number to 5, find and represent number 6, 7 and 8 and using scales to find out which items are heavier and lighter.

The children have worked really this term! Well done Reception children!

# Year 1



## Year 1 Spring Term 1 Newsletter

Year 1 has had a delightful and exciting Spring Term! In our **English lessons**, we explored writing in the past tense, describing characters from “The Gruffalo” story, retelling events, and learning how to create question sentences based on our class Reading book “Out of the Blue”. We enjoyed working with the stories during our Reading lessons, developing our comprehension skills. In **Maths**, we had been focusing Place Value, understanding tens and ones and what numbers they create within 20. We’ve been developing our knowledge on how numbers above 10 are represented by visuals, its numerals and word names. In **Science**, we learned about plants, labelling parts of flowers and trees and exploring around the school in our fields to see if we can identify wildflowers and garden flowers. We have also learnt about deciduous and evergreen trees and sorting them by closely looking at their leaves. In our **PSHE**, we have been learning about our dreams and goals and having plentiful discussions about the challenges we might face to successfully achieve them. We went through many challenges in our PSHE lesson such as creating a jam sandwich as a class and to make stretch flowers. In **History**, we learnt about the importance of Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale and their impact towards the changes they have made in Nursing and Medicine. We explored their life in the past and compared it to the present and Year 1s were very lucky to have the opportunity to observe and explore artifacts from the past. In **Music**, we have been learning about tempo and used our bodies and instruments to respond to music that are fast and slow. We performed a rhyme and song using our instruments in class! Finally in **Art**, we learned about print-making and used different tools such as plasticine and ink to print shells onto our work and did rubbings using our pencils and objects from our classroom and from nature.

Year 1 worked incredibly hard and had a fantastic Spring Term full of fun learning and we look forward to even more wonderful learning in the term ahead!



# Year 2

We started the Spring Term with a very exciting trip to Beaulieu Motor Museum. There the children explored how transport has changed over time through a interactive workshop. They also got to ride on a open top bus, ride in a 100 year old car and go on the monorail. We all had a lot of fun!



In PSHE we have been revisiting the 'zones of regulation'. We recapped the four different zones and how we may be feeling in each one. We also discussed some methods to help us regulate. The children then created some lovely posters on the different zones.



As a part of National Storytelling Week the Year 2's joined an online workshop where we explored the magic of storytelling through music with author, storyteller and musician, Annemarie Anang and her book 'I am Nefertiti'.



This term in Design and Technology, Year 2 have been exploring the fascinating world of materials and how everyday products are made. The children began by investigating natural materials such as wool, learning where it comes from and how it is transformed from fleece to yarn.

Inspired by their discoveries, the pupils then moved on to designing their very own purses. They experimented with wool and felt, practising basic stitches and developing their fine motor skills along the way. With plenty of concentration—and a lot of pride—they stitched their designs together to create unique, colourful purses to take home.

It's been a wonderful blend of creativity, problem-solving, and hands on learning, and the children should be incredibly proud of what they've achieved.



# Year 3

We've had a wonderfully busy and productive few weeks in Year 3, filled with exciting learning across all our subjects.

## Writing

In Writing, the children have been working hard to develop their handwriting, spelling and grammar skills. We've been learning how to convert spoken words into direct speech using inverted commas, as well as using apostrophes for possession. The children have shown great enthusiasm and growing confidence as they apply these skills in their writing.

## Maths

In Maths, our focus has been on multiplication and division. We've explored how these two operations are linked as inverses of each other, and we've been practising our 3 and 4 times tables to build fluency. The children have enjoyed using different strategies and models to deepen their understanding.

## History

Our History topic has taken us on a journey from the Bronze Age into the Iron Age. We've been learning how Iron Age people lived, including how they built hillforts, farmed the land, made tools from iron, and lived in roundhouses within close-knit communities. The children were fascinated to discover how much daily life changed as new materials and technologies developed.

A real highlight was our **Stone Age Day**, where the children had the chance to step back in time and experience life as cavepeople. From creating tools to taking part in hands-on activities, the day was full of fun, imagination and brilliant learning.

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### **Art**

In Art, we've been inspired by the work of Henri Matisse. The children have been 'painting with scissors'—cutting and layering colourful shapes to explore positive and negative space. Their creativity has really shone through, and the classroom displays are looking fantastic.

### **Computing**

In Computing, we've been learning all about networks—what they are, how devices connect to each other, and how information travels. The children have enjoyed exploring how technology links together in the world around them.

### **French**

In French, we've been learning the names of different animals and practising how to say simple sentences using them. The children have loved joining in with speaking activities and games to build their confidence.

We've had so much fun with all our learning this term, and we're incredibly proud of the children's hard work and enthusiasm. We look forward to even more exciting learning ahead!

# Year 4

## Geography

This term, our children have been exploring Spain with great excitement, focusing on the vibrant cities of Madrid, Barcelona, and Valencia. Thanks to our collaboration with Reading Museum, we've had the wonderful opportunity to gain richer insight into the city of Valencia—its cultural treasures, traditions, and religious heritage



The children were captivated by the objects they examined, making predictions about what they were and how they might have been used. They then learned about each item and its connection to the wider world of art and culture. Using this new knowledge, they went on to create their own fact files.



## Science

This term, one of our science units has focused on developing a deeper understanding of sound. The children explored how sound travels, the mediums through which it moves most quickly, the relationship between volume and the strength of vibrations, and how distance affects what we hear. After making their own predictions, the children carried out a series of investigations to test their ideas—observing, discussing, and drawing conclusions from their results.



Through their investigations, the children learned that sound travels fastest through solids—particularly metals—when compared with liquids or gases. Drawing on their previous lessons about how particles are arranged in the three states of matter, they were able to explain that particles in solids are packed closely together, allowing vibrations to pass through them more rapidly



The children also discovered that sound is measured in decibels, and that stronger vibrations produce higher decibel readings. Their experiments further showed that the closer we are to the source of a sound, the higher the decibel level recorded.

# Year 5

Year 5 have had a brilliant start to the spring term; from landscapes in Art to the Ancient Greeks in History, this has been a very exciting time with lots of interesting topics!

In Writing, Year 5 have been writing setting descriptions and diary entries based on our class reading books from last term. It has been wonderful to see all their brilliant writing skills come together into high quality work!



In Maths we wrapped up fractions and moved on to multiplication and division using formal written methods. The children have challenged themselves to be skilled arithmeticians, building their fluency across all topics. Keep practicing at home!

The Ancient Greeks have been a fascinating topic in History: covering everyday life to the Olympic games. The children have created wonderful work reflecting their research.

In Art, it has been wonderful to try out a range of techniques used by artists who create land and cityscapes, the children have created some varied and interesting art in their sketchbooks and challenged themselves to use mixed media in their coastal designs.



In music the children have explored South and West African music, culminating in performances using drums as inspired by traditional African artists.



Here are some of things the children have enjoyed and shared with us this term:

I liked how we used different materials in Art - Lucy

I liked PE this term, football and the teamwork games – Ellen

I enjoyed Art this term, drawing and painting landscapes – Janusz

This term I liked PE, music and maths – particularly fractions – Kevin

I liked how we learnt to play the drums and making our eight-beats – Zoey

We look forward to what the second half of Spring term will bring for Year 5!

# Year 6

We are delighted to share all the wonderful learning that has taken place in Year 6 this half term. The children have worked incredibly hard and continue to show enthusiasm, curiosity and resilience across the curriculum. Here is an overview of what we have been doing:

## Reading

This half term we have been enjoying *Oh Maya Gods* by Maz Evans. Vocabulary development has continued to be a focus, with children practising new words daily. They have also strengthened their scanning skills through quick-fire challenges where adults ask them to locate words or phrases on the page. We finished the book last week to rapturous applause and cheering from the class—an excellent sign of how engaged and invested they were!

The text linked beautifully with our History learning about the Maya, and the children confidently identified similarities between the story and what we discovered in lessons. Many pupils are also improving the depth of their written reading responses using sentence stems such as “*This suggests that...*” to explain their ideas clearly.

We are now excited to begin our next text, *The London Eye Mystery* by Siobhan Dowd.

## Writing

In Writing, the children produced highly successful diary entries written from the perspective of Sukie in *Letters from the Lighthouse*. We were thrilled that our Deputy Director of Education, Tom Twort, visited and commented on the impressive flair the children showed, particularly their use of literary devices to create vivid imagery.

We then moved on to writing recounts in the form of blog posts about a fictional “break in” at school. The children worked collaboratively to build subject-specific vocabulary, plan their ideas and adopt an appropriately formal tone to report on the event. They continue to make great progress in using a variety of sentence structures to create impact in their writing.

To prepare for next half term, the children have already begun exploring features they will use when writing a persuasive theme park brochure. They have practiced using superlatives, similes and metaphors, modal verbs, expanded lists and the rule of three—tools that will support them in producing engaging persuasive texts.

## **Maths**

This half term we completed our unit on fractions and moved on to studying position and direction, measures and decimals. The children have spent time strengthening their foundational knowledge, and many are recognising just how important secure times table recall is for success in these areas. We kindly ask that children continue practising their times tables and corresponding division facts at home to support their progress.

## **Science**

In Science, we have been studying *evolution and inheritance*. We explored inherited characteristics, adaptations and the concept of “survival of the fittest.” A particular highlight was when Mrs Nightingale shared her fossil collection with us. The children were fascinated to hold ammonites millions of years old, as well as a real shark’s tooth! They also investigated how different animals have adapted over time to survive in their environments.

## **Humanities**

This half term we concluded our learning about the Maya civilisation. The children really enjoyed linking their History knowledge with our class text, *Oh Maya Gods*, and especially liked exploring the Maya gods before designing their own. We also took part in a Maya maths session where we learned how their number system works—this was quite complex, so resilience was key!

In Geography, our new topic is *Our Blue Planet*. We have begun learning about the different ocean zones and the types of marine life found at each level. A standout moment was examining a cod skeleton borrowed from Reading Museum, which sparked great curiosity and discussion. We are excited to continue learning about our oceans and how we can protect them.

## **PSHE & Personal Development**

In PSHE, the children have been learning about the Zones of Self-Regulation. They have built personal toolkits to help them recognise their feelings and identify strategies to return to the “green zone.” We discussed how stress, anxiety and anger can affect our bodies and explored a range of techniques to support emotional regulation. The children practised journaling, breathing strategies and shared tips with one another to promote wellbeing.

Thank you for your ongoing support. The children have achieved so much already, and we look forward to another brilliant half term ahead. If you have any questions about our learning, please do get in touch.

## Attendance Information

Attendance is a key priority for our school this term. We want to ensure that all children's attendance percentages are in line or above national average of 97%. Children with an attendance of 97% above are more likely to be happier attending school, make better progress and eventually achieve better in formal exams. Please see below how even missing a few days of school can lead to many hours of learning missed.

Yearly Attendance	Days Missed	Hours Missed
100%	0	0
97%	6	30
95%	10	50
90%	20	100
80%	40	200

Nursery		Reception		Year 1		Year 2	
am	pm	Kerr	Rosen	Cole	Donaldson	Ahlberg	Butterworth
86.5%	88.2%	99.3%	92.3%	93.1%	98.9%	95.3%	95.6%
Year 3		Year 4		Year 5		Year 6	
Benjamin	King-Smith	Binch	Pullman	Hughes	Morpurgo	Horowitz	Lewis
94.1%	97.9%	94.1%	92.9%	95.2%	96.4%	90.1%	94.7%



**Attendance for The Whole School Year Is Currently  
94.2%**

**Attendance Raffle**

You have to be in it to win it! If you attend school every day you will automatically be put into our attendance raffle which will be drawn on a Friday afternoon. A winner from each class will be selected and win a special prize. We are also now holding a half term raffle for those children who have 100 percent attendance where they can win prizes such as amazon vouchers, Roblox points, art kits and pencil cases. All the children have to do to be in with a chance of winning is to be in school every day!



**Well Done!**

**R1 Kerr from lower school  
3 King-Smith from upper school**



**Anning - Yellow is the winning house. - Congratulations!**



## Do I need to keep my child off school?

**HSC** Public Health Agency

<b>Chicken Pox</b> Until all spots have crusted over	<b>Conjunctivitis</b> No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	<b>Diarrhoea &amp; Vomiting</b> 48 hours from last episode	<b>Glandular Fever</b> No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	<b>Hand, foot &amp; mouth</b> No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	<b>Impetigo</b> Until lesions are crusted & healed or 48 Hours after commencing antibiotics
<b>Measles or German Measles</b> 4 days from onset of rash	<b>Mumps</b> 5 days from onset of swelling	<b>Scabies</b> Until after first treatment	<b>Scarlet Fever</b> 24 hours after commencing antibiotics	<b>Slapped Cheek</b> No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	<b>Whooping Cough</b> 48 Hours after commencing antibiotics
<b>Flu</b> Until recovered	<b>Head Lice</b> No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	<b>Threadworms</b> No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	<b>Tonsillitis</b> No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed		

### Reminders and Information for Parents

<b>PE DAYS</b>	
<b>CLASS</b>	<b>DAYS</b>
<b>RECEPTION</b>	<b>TUESDAY</b>
<b>YEAR 1</b>	<b>MONDAY and WEDNESDAY</b>
<b>YEAR 2</b>	<b>TUESDAY and WEDNESDAY</b>
<b>YEAR 3</b>	<b>TUESDAY and THURSDAY</b>
<b>YEAR 4</b>	<b>MONDAY and THURSDAY</b>
<b>YEAR 5</b>	<b>WEDNESDAY and FRIDAY</b>
<b>YEAR 6</b>	<b>TUESDAY and FRIDAY</b>

## REAch2 Academy Trust and The Palmer Academy

### Mobile Phone Statement

This statement outlines the Trust's position on mobile phone use by children to ensure a safe, focused and respectful learning environment. It supports safeguarding, reduces distractions, and promotes positive social interaction.

#### Scope

This statement applies to all children enrolled at a REAch2 school. It does not apply to staff or visitors, who are expected to follow separate guidance on appropriate mobile phone use.

#### Statement

Mobile phones are not permitted to be used by children during the school day, including during lessons, break times and lunch periods in any REAch2 school. This includes smartwatches and other connected devices with communication capabilities.

#### Rationale

**Safeguarding:** Mobile phones can be used to access inappropriate content, take unauthorised photos or videos, or engage in cyberbullying.

**Learning focus:** Phones are a distraction and can disrupt lessons and concentration.

**Social development:** Encouraging face-to-face interaction support emotional and social growth.

**Equity:** Reduces pressure on families to provide expensive devices.

#### Implementation

##### *Before and After School:*

Children who need a phone for safety reasons (e.g. walking home alone), must hand their mobile phone into the school office upon arrival and collect it at the end of the day.

Phones must be switched off and stored securely by staff during school hours.

##### *During School hours:*

Children are not permitted to use or access mobile phones.

Any phone seen or heard during the school day will be confiscated and will need to be collected by a parent.

*(Schools have the power to confiscate mobile phones or similar devices as a disciplinary penalty. The law protects staff from liability in any proceedings brought against them for any loss or damage to items they have confiscated as a sanction, providing they have acted lawfully. Staff should consider whether the confiscation is proportionate and consider any special circumstances relevant to the case)*

#### Communication with Parents

This statement will be shared with parents/carers via the school's newsletter, the school website and when a child starts at the school.

Parents are asked to support the Trust's position by not contacting children directly during the school day.

#### Medical Exceptions

We recognise that there are exceptional circumstances where access to a mobile device is necessary for health and safety reasons.

Children with documented medical conditions that require the use of a mobile phone e.g. to monitor blood glucose levels, manage asthma, or communicate with healthcare providers, may be exempt from this policy. In such cases, parent or guardians should provide appropriate medical documentation and work with school staff to develop an agreed-upon plan.

#### Monitoring and Review

This statement will be reviewed every 2 years by the Trust's Head of IT and updated as necessary to reflect changes in technology, safeguarding guidance or Trust/school needs.

## Diary Dates

**23rd February** - Children return to school

**5th March** - World Book Day

**9th– 13th March** - Bikeability Year 5 Level 1 & 2

**16th March** - Year 4 Trip to Living Rainforest

**26th March** - Lower School Awards Assembly (10.00)

**27th March** - Upper School Awards Assembly (10.30)

**27th March** - Children finish for Easter

## Parents reminders

### Uniform

Could we please ask Parents/Carers to make sure all uniforms are clearly labelled.

Nearly all the uniform emptied from the lost property bins is unnamed, making it impossible to return to the rightful owners.

### School lunches

Parents are now able to cancel and book school dinners up to 9am in the morning. Please remember to order for your child before this time and cancel any meals not required should your child be absent for the day, you will still be charged if meals aren't cancelled. Meals should only be ordered by the school office on the rare occasion that you may have forgotten to order. Please note the office are now only able to order jacket potato with beans and fresh fruit for pudding. Please speak to the school office if you need a reminder of how to order through Parent Pay.

