



# Headteacher

## NEWSLETTER



### Update from Ms. Parkhouse

It has been a week of celebration and growth here at Sandy Lane. I am consistently seeing our pupils rising to the high expectations we are setting – we are committed to inspiring limitless potential through our PRIDE values!

#### Athletics Success: Our Year 5 & 6 Finalists!

I am incredibly proud of our Year 5 and 6 students who competed in the Sports Hall Athletics finals this week. While we didn't place in the top five in the final, the result is only a small part of the story. They qualified on merit and represented our school with incredible energy and sportsmanship. Seeing them have so much fun and support one another is exactly what our school spirit is about. Well done to our athletes!

#### PRIDE in our School Community

I am super impressed with the calm, focused learning environment evident across all year groups. Our PRIDE values are shining, particularly during our weekly assemblies. It is a joy to see the "spirit fingers" out in force for the House Point Awards, the genuine cheers for our weekly attendance winners and the kindness pupils show when their peers receive awards. We are also continuing our "Weekly Motivation" pledges. Following a drive on handwriting last week, this week we are focusing on Golden Manners. We are practicing saying "you're welcome" when someone says "thank you" and learning to return a greeting when asked how we are (e.g., "I'm good thanks, and how are you?"). It's these small interactions that make our school such a polite and welcoming place to be.

#### Safe Play: Our 'No Physical Contact' Policy

To ensure our playtimes remain as positive as our lessons, we have been working hard to teach clear expectations for the playground.



**Starting immediately, we have moved to a "No Physical Contact" policy.** We have explained to the children that this means an end to "play fighting," rough play, or games that 'accidentally' get too physical. This falls within the 'Safe' part of our 'Ready, Respectful and Safe' school rules.

We have explained to the children that acceptable contact could be high-fives, an arm around a shoulder to encourage a friend, or tag-based games but that any rough play that is deemed "physical contact" is unacceptable as it leads to unsafe scenarios. Children have been taught about why this is important for everyone's safety. We will be using our behaviour policy to enforce this consistently, and I would be very grateful if you could reinforce this message at home.

**Thank you for your ongoing support and for helping us maintain such a fantastic school community.**



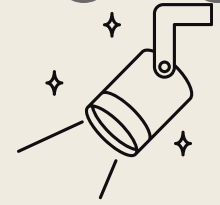
OUR PRIDE, LIMITLESS TOGETHER





SENCO  
Mr Walsh

## Spotlight on SEND



### Why Visuals and Language Matter for Everyone

- In school, we often use specific SEND strategies to help children navigate their day. However, these aren't just 'school tools' - they are incredibly effective at home, too. Whether your child has an additional need or is simply having a 'big emotions' kind of day, shifting how we communicate can transform the atmosphere at home.
- Think of a visual (a picture, a list, or even a simple drawing) as a permanent reminder. When we speak, our words 'disappear' as soon as we say them. If a child is tired, distracted, or overwhelmed, those words don't always land. A visual stays there, providing a constant reference point.
- Try this: instead of a long list of verbal instructions for the morning routine, try a simple "Now and Next" approach on a post-it note. For example: Now: Breakfast / Next: Teeth. By showing them what to do rather than just telling them, you remove the pressure of them having to "remember" everything at once.
- The way we phrase things can also change how a child's brain responds. Often, when we are in a rush, we lead with "Don't"—as in "Don't jump on the sofa" or "Don't forget your bag."
- Interestingly, the brain has to process the "action" before it can process the "don't." By the time they've pictured jumping on the sofa, the instruction is already lost! A more powerful approach for all children is to tell them exactly what you want to see.
- Instead of "Don't run," try "Please use walking feet." Instead of "Stop shouting," try "I need you to use a quiet voice." Instead of "Don't mess around," try "Please keep your hands to yourself."
- Using these strategies reduces what we call "cognitive load." It makes life predictable and clear. When children feel they understand what is expected of them and can see what is coming next, their anxiety levels drop, and their cooperation goes up. It moves us away from "nagging" and toward "coaching," which helps everyone's well-being.



FSW  
Mrs Hurley

## Safeguarding at Sandy Lane



### Coffee Mornings

As part of my role as Family Support Worker, I have been busy working behind the scenes getting to know the children. I would now really like the opportunity to get to know you as well.

Over the course of the term, I will be arranging coffee mornings for different year groups. In addition to this, I would like to make myself available should you wish to come and speak with me at any time, whether to discuss a concern, ask a question, or simply have a chat.

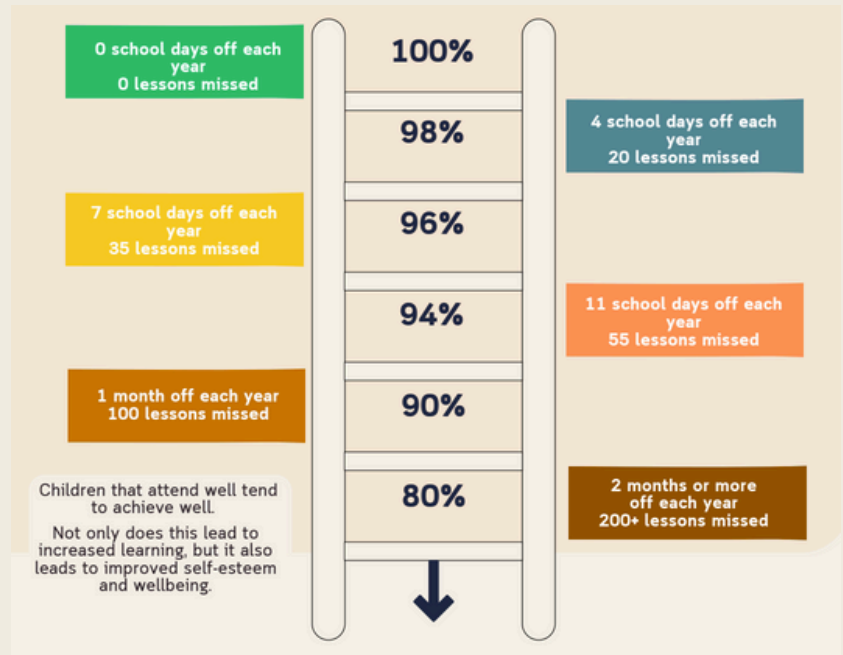
I see my role as a support system for both our children and families at Sandy Lane. If there is anything you feel I may be able to help with, I would be more than happy to meet with you either on a group basis or individually.

I plan to be on the main gate during the week before half term and the week after half term, so please do feel free to come and say hello.



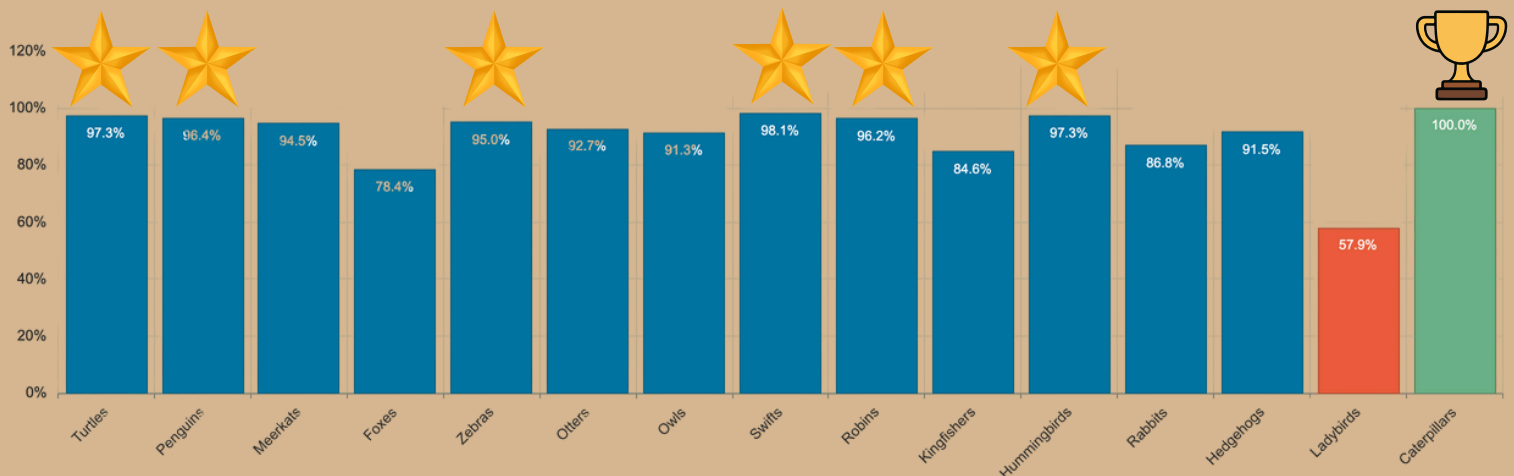
# Focus on Attendance

- Absence should only occur when your child is far too ill to attend.
- If your child is suffering from Colds, Headaches, Tiredness or Sore throat we would suggest that you administer paracetamol or ibuprofen and bring them into school.
- If their condition deteriorates, we will always call you.
- Family holidays and day trips must be arranged outside of school hours.
- Medical or dental appointments should be arranged outside of school hours, if this is not possible supporting evidence should be provided please.



## This Fortnight in Figures...

Date Range: 18/01/2026 - 30/01/2026



OUR PRIDE, LIMITLESS TOGETHER

# Eco Council RSPB Bird Watch

On Monday 26th January some members of the Sandy Lane Eco Committee took part in the RSPB's Big School Bird watch. We had great fun looking for and identifying the variety of birds that visit our school.

The most populous bird on our school field were the magpies, quickly followed by the woodpigeons. We were able to count a few robins and blue tits. Our most exciting spot were the two hawks who kept flying overhead. We are hoping for more visitors next year as we will be setting up some feeding points as part of our eco work this year.



## THE BIG \* SCHOOLS' \* BIRDWATCH



## Language of the Month



At Sandy Lane, we are incredibly proud to be a school that speaks 38 different languages. To celebrate this rich cultural diversity, our pupil German Ambassadors are officially launching our new 'Language of the Month' initiative!

Each month, we will spotlight one of the many languages spoken within our school community. Our goal is to ensure every child feels seen and heard, while giving all pupils the chance to learn something new.

- Class representatives will take the lead in teaching their peers how to say 'hello', 'good morning', and 'good afternoon'.
- Throughout the month, teachers and pupils will use these greetings during morning registration and when welcoming each other at the school gates.
- Our German Ambassadors will be meeting every Tuesday lunchtime to dive deeper into the facts, culture, and history of the featured country.

“ A huge thank you to Frau Marshall and our dedicated German Ambassadors for helping us celebrate the wonderful multilingualism that makes Sandy Lane so special! ”



### February's Language: Italian

We are kicking things off this February with Italian. Don't be surprised if you hear a cheerful "Ciao!" or "Buongiorno!" at the school gates next week.

Our Ambassadors have already been busy distributing posters around the school, and we can't wait to see our classrooms come alive with the sounds of a new language.

# Connecting Our Community...

**Bracknell Forest's Family Hubs** are an incredible resource designed to support local families at every stage of the journey - from pregnancy through to the teenage years.

If you are a local parent, here is why this tool is a "must-bookmark" and how you can make the most of it:

- You can find health advice, playgroups, and specialist parenting courses all in one place.
- Most of the play and activity sessions listed are free to attend and often don't require booking, perfect for last-minute plans.
- These hubs are designed to combat the isolation that can come with parenting, offering safe spaces to meet other local mums and dads.
- You get direct access to Health Visitors, breastfeeding specialists, and experienced facilitators without the stress of navigating complex referral systems.

## Key Services to Look Out For

### **For Expectant & New Parents**

- Preparing to be Mum/Dad: Dedicated workshops to build practical skills (bathing, changing) and discuss the emotional transition to parenthood.
- Baby Weigh Clinics: Drop-in sessions held at various locations like The Alders, Priestwood, The Oaks, and The Rowans. No booking needed!
- Breastfeeding Advice: Bookable 1-on-1 support at The Alders on Fridays.

### **Play & Child Development**

- Baby PEEP: A 6-week course focused on child development through songs, rhymes, and books.
- Play and Learn Groups: Term-time weekly groups that help children socialise while giving parents a chance to chat about healthy eating and parenting tips.

### **Mental Health & Wellbeing**

- Mums in Mind: A nurturing, confidential space for mums feeling low in mood to connect with others who have similar experiences.
- Baby and Mum Group: Specifically designed for those with babies aged 0-12 months to build confidence and lasting friendships.

### **Digital & At-Home Support**

- Bracknell Bumps and Babies: A private Facebook group for safe, peer-to-peer online support.
- Relationship Courses: Free online modules like "Me, You and Baby Too" and "Arguing Better" to help couples navigate the changes a new baby brings.

## How to Get Started

- Check the Family Hub Activities page for the latest session times and locations here.
- Text for Advice: Use the Chat Health service. If you have a child under 5, you can text a Health Visitor directly at 07312 263283.
- Email [early.help@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:early.help@bracknell-forest.gov.uk) to find out when the next specific courses (like PEEP) are starting.

*Many of these sessions are "drop-in," meaning you don't need to commit to a long-term schedule. You can just turn up when it suits your family's routine!*



**Email us at:** [secretary@sandylanebracknell.com](mailto:secretary@sandylanebracknell.com) with one page posters and we will endeavour to include it in our newsletter (please avoid emails with lots of text!)

OUR PRIDE, LIMITLESS TOGETHER

