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Whole School Newsletter – September 2026

Message from Miss Spark

It has been wonderful to welcome our children back to Freegrounds Junior School and to see how quickly they have settled into their new classes. I have been particularly impressed by their positive attitudes to learning and by the excellent standards of school uniform across the school. Thank you to parents and carers for your continued support. A special welcome goes to all of our new families, particularly those joining us in Year 3. We are delighted to have you as part of our Freegrounds community. Every year group has made a fantastic start to the year. Year 3 have settled confidently into junior school life, Year 4 have thrown themselves into their learning with enthusiasm, Year 5 have enjoyed the exciting start to their space-themed topic, and Year 6 have demonstrated maturity and leadership as they begin their final year at Freegrounds. Our Year 6 residential visit to the Isle of Wight was a tremendous success. The children showed resilience, teamwork and independence throughout the trip, and represented the school brilliantly. My sincere thanks go to all of the staff who gave up their time to attend and make this memorable experience possible. As always, there is a great deal to look forward to this term, including our Harvest celebrations, PTA events, trips, performances and the many exciting learning opportunities planned for every year group. Thank you for your continued support of the school. Together, we can ensure that every child has a happy, successful and memorable year at Freegrounds.

Staffing Update

We are sad to announce that Mrs Seymour will be leaving us at the end of this week. Mrs Seymour first joined Freegrounds 13 years ago, when her own children were pupils at the school. Now that both of her children have grown up and moved away to university, she feels that the time is right to take on a new challenge and try something different.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Mrs Seymour for her hard work, dedication and commitment to Freegrounds over the years. She has always supported the school far beyond her role in the classroom and has been such a valued member of our wider school community. Mrs Seymour regularly gives up her time to support our Year 6 residentials, helps with the microphones and sound system during school productions and is always willing to step in and cover in the school office when needed. Her willingness to help wherever she is needed has made such a difference to school life, and she will be greatly missed by the children and staff alike.

We would like to wish Mrs Seymour every happiness and the very best of luck as she begins this exciting new chapter. We hope she enjoys her new adventure and knows how much she will be missed here at Freegrounds.

Vacancy

We have an exciting opportunity for a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) to join our team. For further information about the role, please take a look at the advert on the Hampshire Educational Jobs website. Closing date: Thursday 1st October.

Learning Support Assistant - full time (fixed term till 31/07/2026) | 1 October, 2026 | Jobs and careers with Hampshire County Council



My Happy Mind

This year we have launched myHappymind, as a programme to deliver our PSHE and mental health and wellbeing lessons.

Our first module is called 'Meet Your Brain' - this module is focused on giving children a foundational knowledge of the brain and teaching them how they can look after their minds to be at their very best. Children learn that their brain is an organ and that it has many functions. They learn that the brain controls most of what we do and that it is an amazing thing!

The children learn about three key parts of their brain: the Hippocampus, the Amygdala and Prefrontal Cortex. We call them Team H-A-P for short and they each have a special role: Hippocampus - is like a scrapbook storing our memories and things that we learn. Amygdala - is there to react to keep us safe when there is danger. It cannot assess danger. It can only react if it senses it by Fighting, Flighting or Freezing! Prefrontal Cortex - helps us to make decisions, understand different perspectives, solve problems, analyse and make choices.

The key concept here is that we can be at our best when Team H-A-P are working together. When we feel stressed or worried, Team H-A-P cannot work well together and our Amygdala will take over and cause us to react (without thinking). When we feel stressed, worried or sense danger, the Amygdala takes over and Team H-A-P doesn't work well together. The children learn that, when this happens, the best thing that they can do is take slow, deep breaths as this is scientifically proven to help calm the mind, especially the Amygdala.



To learn more about myHappymind and access amazing free resources download the parent app!
(An email was sent last week with our school login details).

Friends of Freegrounds Junior School (FoFJS)

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Our PTA, Friends of Freegrounds Junior School, are holding their AGM on Tuesday 3rd November 2026, at 7:00pm. This will be an online event, and further details with the online link will be sent out nearer the time. The meeting will include a review of the past year, discussion about upcoming plans and the election of new committee members. We would like to welcome new faces and encourage everyone to attend.

Get involved

Our PTA plays a pivotal role in the life of our school, raising vital funds and providing wonderful opportunities and experiences for our children.

Without the support of our fantastic parent and carer community, they would not be able to continue organising events such as school discos, Christmas shopping and our Summer Fayre. These events not only raise much-needed funds for the school, but also create a wonderful sense of community and provide our children with memorable experiences.

There are lots of ways you can get involved, and **every contribution, however big or small, makes a difference**. Whether you can become part of the committee, volunteer at an event, help with organising, donate items or simply lend a hand when needed, your support is hugely appreciated.

If you would like to get involved, please contact the PTA via the school office or through their Facebook page: **Friends of Freegrounds Junior School,** or speak to Mrs Blake.

We have many wonderful ideas for this academic year but need your help!

Provisional events (details will be sent out nearer the time):

Autumn Term:
Disco
Elfridges- Pop up Christmas Shop
Freegrounds' Festive Fayre

Spring Term:
Family Bingo Night
Disco
Conka Bars on Sale for World Book Day
Family Quiz Night

Summer Term:
Disco
Summer Fayre
Colour Run

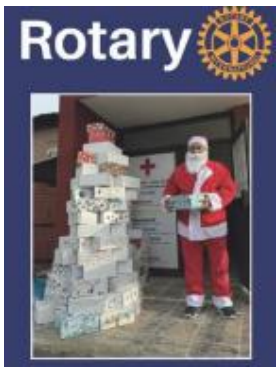


Rotary Shoebox Appeal

We are delighted to be supporting the Rotary Club Christmas Shoebox appeal again this year, supporting disadvantaged children around the world.

The Wessex Rotary Shoebox Scheme collects and sends shoeboxes filled with gifts to disadvantaged children in Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, and Ukraine (via Poland), ensuring they receive them in time for Christmas. These special packages are prepared using specific card boxes provided by Wessex Rotary, and there are guidelines available in the form of a leaflet and a video that explain how to assemble and fill the boxes.

The scheme categorises the contents of the boxes based on the gender and age of the child recipient. Last year, 18,000 boxes were sent from their warehouse in Christchurch, spreading joy among children, including refugees from Ukraine in Poland.



If you would like to contribute, please read the attached information leaflet and collect a flat pack box from the school office.
To donate via school, all gift boxes must be returned to the school office with £2 attached, by Monday 12th October 2026.

Spread the word and help us bring joy to more children this Christmas!

Harvest Donations

For our Harvest celebrations this year, the children will be visited in assembly .by Rev Phil from the local church on Tuesday 20th November. They will take part in the assembly learning all about the Harvest Festival and the importance of giving to others. The children will also take part in some Harvest themed singing.

On this day, we are asking for children to bring in an item to donate to our local food bank- The Food Centre at Kings Community Church. This will be an inter-house competition, with the house who donates the most items earning extra playtime. The Food Centre are grateful for any non-perishable items, however have a particular shortage of the following:

- Jam
- Tinned tuna
- Tinned hot dogs
- Tinned fruit
- Packet rice
- Noodles
- Tinned tomatoes
- Washing up liquid



If you are able to donate any items, please send them in with your child on the morning of Tuesday 20th October.

Year 3

We're so proud of how well our Year 3 children have settled into the new school year! They've shown great enthusiasm, resilience and embraced new routines with a positive attitude. It's been a fantastic start and we are very excited to see all they will achieve. A big well done from your teachers Miss Thomas, Miss Barrett and Miss Brightwell.

In Art this half term, the children will be focusing on the artist Andy Goldsworthy and Stephen Wiltshire. Over the coming weeks, if they haven't already, your child will be creating their own land art focused around famous landmarks across the United Kingdom and will have the opportunity to use our new upstairs art room. We all spent time outside in the manipulative play area, using twigs, leaves, stones, acorn cups and other natural items to build the structure of their arch sculptures. The children needed to show careful collaboration within their teams to help design and create their arch sculpture. Elm class have visited the new upstairs art room to complete the painting of their complementary colour wheel. Lots of time and care was taken with mixing specific primary colours to create other colours that were then neatly added onto the colour wheel. We were all very excited to see these new colours being created and enjoyed working out how to make them lighter and darker.







In Geography this half term, the children are learning about the United Kingdom. Already, the children have been using atlases to locate the different seas surrounding the British Isles; matching countries and their capital cities together and deciding which landmarks go where on the map.

In Science we are exploring magnets and what makes things attract and repel. The children sorted materials into magnetic and non-magnetic and looked at attract and repel.





Year 4

What a wonderful start Year 4 have had! The children have settled into their new classrooms brilliantly and have shown enthusiasm, kindness and a real eagerness to learn. We have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know them and are already so proud of how well they have embraced the challenges of a new school year.

In Maths, we have been exploring place value and learning about numbers up to 1,000.

In English, the children have impressed us with their imaginative ideas as they created suspense and wonder in their writing inspired by *The Place in Between*.

Together, we created our Class Charter and designed handprints to represent our commitment to our class promises.

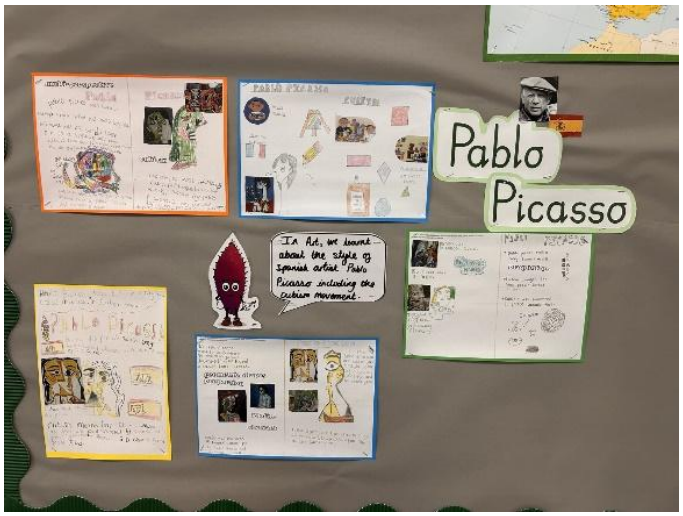
In Art, we have been exploring the work of Pablo Picasso and creating thoughtful response pages inspired by his artwork.

The children also enjoyed tasting a range of pizza toppings in DT as they began planning and designing their own pizzas.

One particular highlight was our first Listen 2 Me music lesson, where everyone enjoyed learning how to play the keyboard.

We are looking forward to another exciting and successful half term ahead!







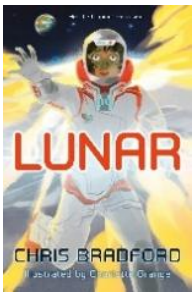
Year 5

Year 5 have enjoyed the start of their 'Out of this World' topic by getting creative in their Science lessons. The children have been working closely together in their groups to create their own heliocentric models – the sun surrounded by all 8 planets. This is currently a work in progress but picture updates will be posted when the final models have been put together!

Inspired by looking at photos of the solar system and galaxies we began our Art unit, on black paper we experimented with different techniques of splattering plaint to achieve a star speckled background. Our final outcome will be a mixed media picture of an astronaut in floating in Space – keep an eye out for a display of our final pieces.



Our topic is also closely linked to our reading and both classes have begun to explore Space themed texts including, 'Lunar' and our class reader, 'The Boy who made the world disappear'. In English, we have started to plan and create our own ghost poems. We cannot wait to read the children's final outcomes!



During Computing lessons, we are continuing to learn to code and will be writing algorithms for quizzes.



We have all enjoyed our start to Year 5 and are looking forward to continuing our journey into outer space!

Year 6

Year 6 have had a fantastic start to the term!

In Art, we have been exploring the work of William Morris, using real natural objects to inspire our own repeating patterns before using IT to see how our floral designs looked when repeated multiple times. William Morris' designs were very popular during the Victorian times and he was seen as a defining cultural figure of Victorian England. This has linked to our history learning during which we have been researching key inventors and inventions that still hold a legacy in today's world. We will move on to look more at the industrial revolution and answer the question: Why is the Industrial Revolution a turning point in British history?





In English, we have been writing exciting escape narratives inspired by 'The Barnabus Project', focusing on how authors create tension and keep readers gripped from beginning to end.

In Science, we began to explore 'How Light Behaves'. We had fun creating hand shadows and using shadow-puppets.







It has also been wonderful to see so many, Year 6 pupils put themselves forward in the House Captain elections, confidently presenting their campaigns to their houses and demonstrating excellent leadership skills.

The residential to Little Canada was a huge success. We are incredibly proud of the children's resilience, independence and attitude throughout the entire trip! Well done Year 6!

ICON Holiday Camp



Diary Dates

Thursday 8th October- Individual School Photos (Yellow Photographers)

Tuesday 13th October- Parents' Evening (Details to follow)

Wednesday 14th October- Parents' Evening (Details to follow)

Tuesday 20th October- School Harvest Celebrations (Please bring donations for Food Bank)

Friday 23rd October – **INSET DAY**

Monday 26th October – Friday 30th October- **HALF TERM**

Monday 2nd November- **BACK TO SCHOOL**

Monday 2nd November-Wednesday 4th November- Year 6 Bikeability

Tuesday 3rd November- Year 3 trip to Butser Ancient Farm

Thursday 5th November- Year 5 Larch Class Beaulieu river trip

Friday 6th November- Pupil Voice trip to the Houses of Parliament (invite only)

Monday 9th November- Year 5 Willow Class Beaulieu river trip

Thursday 12th November- Year 5 Wessex River Trust visiting school

Friday 13th November- Year 5 Cedar Class Beaulieu river trip

Friday 13th November- FoFJS School Disco (Years 3/4- 4:30pm-5:40pm)
(Years 5/6- 5:50pm-7:00pm)

Friday 27th November- **INSET DAY**

Wednesday 2nd December- FoFJS Elfridges Christmas Shopping event

Wednesday 9th December- Year 3 & 4 Christmas Performance 9:15am-10:15am

Thursday 10th December- Rock 2 the Beat concerts (Times TBC)

Friday 11th December- Year 3 & 4 Christmas Performance 2:00pm-3:00pm

Monday 14th December- Year 5 & 6 Christmas Performance 2:00pm-3:00pm

Tuesday 15th December- Year 5 & 6 Christmas Performance 9:15am-10:15am

Wednesday 16th December- Freegrounds' Festive Fayre 3:30pm-5:30pm

Thursday 17th December- Christmas Jumper Day & Christmas Lunch
(£2 cash donation to Cash4Kids South Coast)



Friday 18th December- Festive PJ Day (Children invited to wear festive PJ's to school)

LAST DAY OF TERM

Monday 21st December – Friday 1st January- **CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS**

Monday 4th January- **INSET DAY**

Tuesday 5th January- **BACK TO SCHOOL- SPRING TERM**