

MOUNTJOY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Making a difference today, for tomorrow

Spring 2026

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Dear Parents and Carers

Welcome to our Spring term newsletter. I thought I would take this opportunity to mention all the generosity that you and our community partners endow on us.

We are absolutely thrilled when organisations choose Mountjoy to raise money for. Many different groups, such as the Beaminster Festival, Bridport Folk Festival, the Masons or local businesses or individuals nominate

Mountjoy as their charity of choice. One of my particular favourites is the tractor run, which raises funds and always brings joy to so many children and families.

Of course, our 'Friends of Mountjoy' parent/carer/teacher association is our main benefactor. They run so many events to participate in and this not only raises funds but also provides activities for our children to enjoy. They are always looking for extra support so if you feel you could spare some time, even for a one-off, let us know and we'll put you in touch with the right people.

You may wonder why we need additional funds. The donations go directly to providing our students experiences that are like 'cherries on the cake'. These are usually enrichment activities that enhance learning or improve the environment beyond the core budget.

Whilst these may seem trivial, I know many children who miss out on doing some of the fun things that other children take for granted due to crowds or lack of accessibility.

We couldn't do any of this without you.

Your support means so much to all of us.

With deepest gratitude,

Gill



SAFEGUARDING - Our Highest Priority

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Emma Lambourn



Deputy Designated Safeguarding Leads (DDSL)



Richard Bowskill



Tracey Page



Gill Howard



Sandra Hutchings

The end of another term! We are aware our students enjoy 'downtime' on electronic devices, the online world comes with its own dangers, please keep an eye on what they are accessing, reiterate to them about not oversharing information and thinking about how they say things in chat groups. These are all things covered in school but having your back up really helps.

Please be mindful if students are exploring using AI. Whilst this is something definitely going to be part of our future we need to remember about oversharing information and photos. Once it's 'out there' we can't take it back!

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, we are working to keep our children safe. Something that is prioritised throughout the school.

We do however recognise there are times when extra support might be needed when school is closed.

If you're concerned about a child's safety or well-being you can report concerns to:

In Dorset:

Family Support and Advice Line

Single point of contact for safeguarding concerns

Tel: 01305 228558

Hours: Monday to Friday 8am to 10pm, Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays 9am to 10pm.

Outside of Office Hours: 01305 221000

In Somerset:

Contact Somerset Council Children's Social Care team.

Phone: 0300 123 2224

childrens@somerset.gov.uk

In Devon:

Contact our Devon Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

Phone: 0345 155 1071

Hours: Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm, Friday 9am to 4pm.

Outside office hours: At weekends and public holidays, please contact the Emergency Duty Service on 0345 6000 388.

As always you can call the police on 101 or if you fear there is immediate danger then call 999.

Emma Lambourn, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Sponsored Mile Challenge



Dear Parents and Carers,

We are excited to invite your child to take part in our **Sponsored Mile Challenge** over the Easter holidays!

The idea is simple and flexible: children are encouraged to complete a mile in their own time during the holidays, in a way that suits them best. This could be done all at once or built up over several activities — whatever works for your family.

The mile could include:

- Running or jogging in the park
- Walking the dog
- Swimming lengths at the pool
- Cycling, scootering, or even dancing around the garden
- A combination of different activities adding up to one mile

We would love the children to get creative and make it fun!

Children can ask friends and family members to sponsor them for completing their mile and fill in the attached sponsorship form. All sponsorship money raised will go towards The Friends of Mountjoy charity so we can continue to fund school projects. We truly appreciate your support.

Most importantly, we would LOVE to see photos of the children out and about completing their mile! Whether they're in wellies on a woodland walk, splashing through the pool, or racing around the track, please feel free to send in pictures so we can celebrate their fantastic efforts.

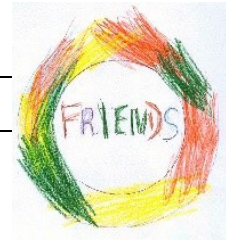
This challenge is all about keeping active, getting out in nature, having fun, and showing determination. We can't wait to hear all about their adventures! Sponsorship money needs to be handed to front desk by end of April.

Thank you for your continued support, and we hope you have a wonderful Easter break.

Kind regards,
The Friends of Mountjoy committee.

(the sponsorship form is on the last page of the newsletter)

The Friends of Mountjoy (FOMS)



Friends of Mountjoy – Chair's Update

It has been a very busy and rewarding term for the Friends of Mountjoy, and we are delighted to share some of the ways your support has helped enrich the school experience for our pupils.



This term we have been pleased to fund several exciting opportunities for students. These included a visit from a theatre company who performed *Macbeth*, giving pupils a fantastic chance to experience live theatre in an engaging and accessible way. We also welcomed The Happy Puzzle Company, whose interactive

sessions encouraged problem-solving, teamwork and plenty of smiles across the school.



For our sixth form students, we have supported a series of independent living skills trips, helping them build confidence and practical skills for life beyond school. We have also funded new outdoor learning

equipment, which will help make the most of our outdoor spaces and provide even more opportunities for hands-on learning.



In addition, we were delighted to provide some lovely new t-shirts for the choir and You Do Music groups, helping our talented performers feel part of the team when they represent the school.

Looking ahead, we will be sending a sponsorship form home for some **Outdoor Fun over Easter-Sponsored Mile**. We would love as many pupils as possible to take part. It's a great way to enjoy the holidays while helping raise vital funds so that Friends of Mountjoy can continue to support the wonderful opportunities the school provides. **Check bags for the letter.**

Finally, we would like to extend our sincere thanks to those who have generously supported us this term. We have been very fortunate to receive a private donation from **Prue Keely and Howard Davies**, as well as a cheque from **St Mary's Lodge Freemasons**, who kindly chose to fundraise for the school. Their generosity makes a real difference.

Thank you, as always, to all families and supporters of Mountjoy. Your involvement helps us continue to provide valuable experiences and resources for the pupils, and we are very grateful for your ongoing support.

Natalie Marsh
Chair, Friends of Mountjoy

Thank you

Thank you to Mencap for so kindly giving every pupil at Mountjoy an Easter egg!



Thank you to St Mary's Lodge for a recent donation of £1500 to Friends of Mountjoy



Governors

Dear Parents/Carers,

Spring is definitely springing in time for our Easter holidays after a damp dull winter. But, however the weather decides to behave, Mountjoy keeps springing forward. Pupils are always engaged in learning and activities that are just right for each individual. Coffee mornings are for parents to share worries and access support. The first coffee morning away from school was held at Groves in Bridport and well attended.



This half term governors and the school leaders have joined together to discuss and agree priorities for the next year looking at key areas:

- Leadership and governance
- Curriculum and teaching
- Attendance and behaviour
- Achievement
- Personal development and wellbeing
- Early years setting within schools
- Post 16 provision

We welcome Jane Biglin as our new Vice Chair, but also thank Janice Pavitt, who has been Vice Chair since October 2022, for her service to the Governors and Mountjoy School. Craig Monks is now our Local Authority Governor taking over from Rebecca Knox. We also welcome Steve Laycock to the Governing Board as an Associate Member; he brings a wealth of experience to the board in SEND.

We have also been reviewing a number of the schools' policies to ensure that they are up to date and these can be found on the school website.

Myself and the Governors send best wishes to everyone for a peaceful Easter holiday, with much chocolate and egg rolling, as well as a well-deserved rest before the energetic summer term, when we look forward to sports days, outdoor visits, careers week and end of term entertainments!

Have a fantastic Easter break!
Helen Farmer, Chair of Governors

New Associate Governor

Dear Parents/Carers

This just a short note to introduce myself as a new Associate Governor on the Mountjoy Governing Body.



My wife and I recently returned to live in Dorset and are now based in Charmouth. I initially trained as a teacher, but only worked in special schools before training as an educational psychologist (EP). For the last 30 years, I have worked in a number of different local authorities as an EP, Principal EP and Head of Special Educational Needs. I am now semi-retired and looking to get involved in things locally.

I am looking forward to learning more about Mountjoy, the fabulous work it does and hope to contribute to its continued drive for success in some small way. There is a lot going on locally and nationally and I am sure the governing body will have a role in planning for this and in keeping you up to date with what is happening. We all know change can be unsettling, but also that good communication can limit any anxiety.

Having just reread this note again, I realise that I have not mentioned the most important people - the children (and of course you as Parents/Carers!). Your children are the reason the school is here. There cannot be any argument that they all face many significant challenges, as do you. I believe we, as governors, have a role in making sure your children make the best of their time at Mountjoy and develop skills that will support them in later life.

Best wishes, Steve Laycock, Associate Member

Mountjoy Nature Day

SAVE THE DATE

JOIN US FOR THE MOUNTJOY NATURE DAY

Friday, MAY 8th 2026

Come and join us to find out

- The importance of nature connection for your child's development and wellbeing
- To see how Mountjoy is using nature in its school provision
- To discover local nature resources to support your children's development
- To hear about our upcoming farm school
- To have a fun day in nature to celebrate of Sir David Attenborough's 100th Birthday

A day of nature-based activities at Mountjoy school bringing together the local community and our school community to celebrate the importance of nature in our lives

FROM THE CLASSES

Ash Class

Welcome to Spring!

As we head into the final term for our Year 11 students, our focus is on supporting them with their next steps—whether that's sixth form or college. We will be arranging additional college visits for those still confirming placements, as well as opportunities for our current Year 10 students.

Learning Through Cafés (Charlotte's Group)

This term, students have been exploring cafés as a theme across Maths and English.

- In **Maths**, they have been working on money skills.
- In **English**, they have been creating café-themed fact files.

Over the Easter holidays, we encourage you to visit cafés with your child so they can practise using money and apply their learning in real-life situations.

Skills & Revision (Nathan & Kat's Groups)

- Nathan's group have been revising key topics for their entry level exams and developing navigation skills, including using a compass.
- Kat's group have been focusing on division—this has been a challenge, but we are making steady progress!
- In **English**, students have also been learning how to give and follow directions.

Arts Carousel – Summer Production

Our Arts Carousel is now focused on preparing for this year's summer performance of *The Tempest*. Students have chosen to specialise in **drama, music, or art** and are working towards the final production.

Duke of Edinburgh

Students have been developing their chosen skills and will soon begin preparing for their upcoming expeditions.

PE Highlights

- Dance sessions with Kelly Trotter have been a big hit!
- Another group has enjoyed multi-skills with Kirsty, including dodgeball and team games.

Looking Ahead to Summer Term

Ash Class are excited for a busy term ahead, including:

- Two residential trips

- Independent travel training
- Café visits
- College visits

We will also be celebrating our Year 11 students as they prepare for their next chapter, including their **end-of-term prom and leavers' assembly**.

Dates to Look Forward To

- Annual Sports Day
- Year 11 Prom & Leavers' Assembly

Easter Wishes

We hope you all have a wonderful Easter break and enjoy the sunshine!

Ash Class Team



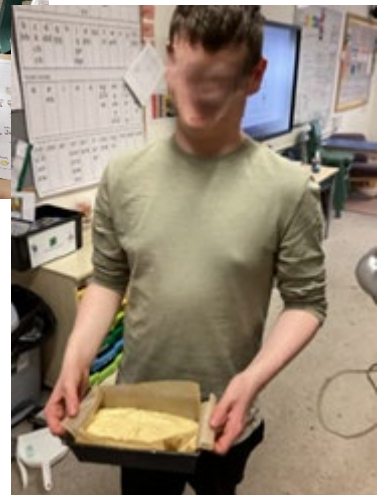
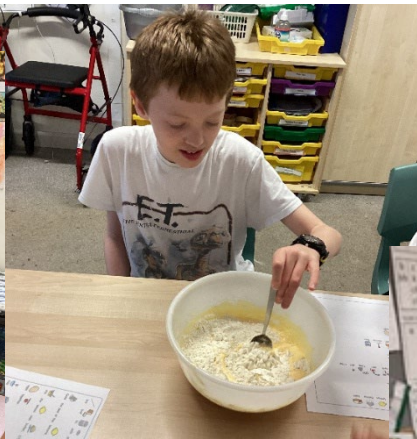
Chestnut Class

Chestnut class have been having a fabulous Spring Term.

Enterprise:

We have been using our maths skills (weighing, measuring, money) to buy and make cakes and other yummy goodies! Our lemon loaf cake was a great success as was our butternut squash soup.

We have used our English skills read and follow the recipe and instructions carefully as well as to persuade staff to buy what we have made so that we can put some money towards a class trip in the summer term (we have written to persuade Stacey to take us to swimming, soft play and lunch!)



Some of us have been to the shops to buy the ingredients for our cooking. We have used our communication skills to ask questions to find out where items are.



Outdoor Learning:



Getting outdoors in the fresh air with Katie for forest school has been the highlight of our Tuesdays. Our activities have allowed us to challenge ourselves, work in teams and pairs and to develop our gross motor skills which will help us greatly with our classwork too. We have been: climbing, balancing, swinging, twisting, sawing, playing, communicating and so much more.

Have an amazing Easter holiday and we look forward to welcoming you all back for another great term.

Stacey and the Chestnut Team.



Acorns Explorers Class



This term has been full of great interactions, exploration, and fun experiences for our class. We are incredibly proud of how much the children have grown in their confidence, communication and physical abilities this term.

One of the highlights this term has been the fantastic progress the children are making with their PECS (Picture Exchange Communication System). Many pupils are becoming more confident in using their pictures to request items, make choices,



and communicate their needs with adults. It has been lovely to see the children increasingly initiating communication and enjoying positive interactions with staff throughout the day.



We have also been focusing on building interaction and shared attention with adults. The children are engaging more during activities and are beginning to develop early social skills such as taking



turns, with adult support. These moments of shared play and communication are really special, and we are seeing more smiles, eye contact, and excitement during group activities, especially with Attention Autism. This is still a favourite activity for many and we have progressed with being in larger groups and engaging in stage three which is turn taking. We love it when it is our turn to get messy with



splattering sandcastles, shaving foam piles and knocking down water bottles.

Our sensory stories of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* have encouraged the children to touch, feel and



taste different foods and textures and has worked on their sensitivities to different sounds and smells. We will look forward to seeing what our next sensory story is next term.



Outdoor learning has been a real highlight this term. We have loved spending time on the field squelching in the mud, exploring the climbing apparatus, and relaxing in the hammocks and swings. Katie (Forest School Lead) has really worked on providing a range of experiences for the class this term which has given the children wonderful opportunities to explore their environment, develop confidence, and

build physical skills while having lots of fun.

In PE, the children have been doing an amazing job in developing their gross motor skills and have been using circuits and the climbing frame, practising balance, climbing, and coordination. The children have shown great determination and enthusiasm, and it has been fantastic to see their growing strength and confidence and the ability to now climb up and down ladders, crawl through tunnels and roll on the cylinders independently.



Overall, it has been a fantastic term full of progress, exploration, and joyful learning. We are so proud of each and every child and look forward to continuing to build on these achievements next term.

Thank you for your continued support.

Becki & Acorns Explorer team



Acorns Investigators

Acorns have had a wonderful and busy term full of exploration and joyful learning. The children have continued to settle beautifully into their routines, building strong relationships with staff and peers, and showing increasing confidence in all that they do. They have all become more independent, curious, and engaged in everything we do.



This term, we have spent lots of time exploring emotions through the story *The Colour Monster*. The children have really enjoyed getting to know the different coloured monsters and the feelings they represent. Using the story as a starting point, we've been helping the children recognise their own emotions, label them, and begin to understand what different feelings look and feel like. As part of this work, we've also been practising using descriptive language to talk about the characters. The children have been

encouraged to notice details such as colours and facial expressions, and to use these clues to describe how a character might be feeling.

In maths, the children have been busy exploring early measurement and number skills through lots of practical, play-based activities. We have been focusing on using the vocabulary heavy and light, and the children have really enjoyed investigating the weight of different objects around the classroom. We used balance scales and a range of familiar items to help the children compare weights. Alongside this, we have been working with numbers 0–9, supporting the children to recognise numerals. We've explored numbers through counting songs, sensory trays, and matching games.



This term, we have been placing a strong focus on developing the children's independence through everyday routines and practical life skills. The children have shown so much enthusiasm and pride as they learn to do more for themselves, and it has been wonderful to see their confidence grow.



We have been exploring simple cooking activities, giving the children opportunities to pour, mix, scoop, and spread. They particularly enjoyed preparing snacks and exploring different textures and smells.



We have also been practising cutting skills, using child-safe scissors to snip paper, cut playdough, and work on simple craft tasks. The children have been so proud of their progress and are becoming more confident in using tools safely and carefully.

As part of our daily routines, we have been encouraging the children to take more responsibility for cleaning and tidying. This includes sweeping up, helping to put toys away, and taking care of their learning environment.

We have also continued to support the children with personal care and hygiene, including practising handwashing, and taking part in our daily tooth-brushing routine. The children have enjoyed using their toothbrushes and following the steps to brush their teeth carefully.



Messy and sensory play has continued to be a key focus in Acorns this term, and the children have absolutely thrived during these sessions. Sensory experiences

help support regulation, communication, curiosity, and early cognitive skills, and it has been wonderful to see how confidently the children are engaging with a wide range of textures, materials, and sensory challenges.



Our Bucket (Attention Autism) sessions remain a highlight of the week. The children have shown fantastic engagement during activities, eagerly watching the exciting objects and messy surprises that appear from the bucket the children have been captivated and motivated to join in.

We have also been enjoying regular Sensology sessions, which help the children tune into their senses and become more aware of their bodies and the world around them. Through activities that stimulate sight, sound, touch, smell, and movement, the children have been exploring new sensations in a calm, structured, and playful way. They particularly enjoy exploring different textures and listening to unusual sounds.

We are already looking forward to next term, where we will continue building on all the wonderful progress the children have made. We have lots of exciting learning opportunities planned, including new sensory experiences, more communication-rich activities, and plenty of chances for the children to develop their independence, creativity, and confidence. We can't wait to see how they continue to flourish as they take on new challenges and explore the world around them.



Thank you for your continued support — we are excited for another fantastic term ahead with our amazing Acorns.



Laurel Class

Exciting Developments in Laurel Class

This spring, we are thrilled to share the developments happening in Laurel class, where we have introduced two distinct groups: Quiet Laurel and Sensory Laurel. This division allows us to tailor learning experiences to meet the needs of our students, ensuring that each child can engage with the curriculum in a way that suits their individual learning styles and sensory requirements.



In Quiet Laurel, students have been enjoying a range of activities designed to enhance their focus and calmness during Academic Learning. Meanwhile, Sensory Laurel has been bustling with energy as we focus on Developmental Play activities to encourage exploration and understanding.

All students have enjoyed exploring the mini gym in Yeovil, engaging in sensory circuits and trampoline activities that support their gross motor skills. All Laurel

students have managed these offsite visits with maturity, and motivation to explore a new environment.



Celebrating Our Achievements

As we move through the spring term, we would like to celebrate the achievements of our students and the hard work of our staff. This term, we have seen progress across various subjects, with students demonstrating their growing confidence and skills. Our focus on fostering independence and self-care skills is paying off, as many students are taking on new responsibilities both in and out of the classroom.

As we continue to support our students' growth, we are excited to see what the rest of the term holds. Thank you to parents and carers for ongoing support and encouragement, which play a vital role in our students' success.

In the coming weeks, we will be making the most of the better weather (hopefully), organising outdoor activities that will allow students to apply their learning in real-world contexts. These experiences are invaluable for developing social skills and fostering a sense of community.

We are looking forward to a vibrant spring filled with learning, growth, and enjoyment. Thank you for being an integral part of our Laurel class family!

Rowan Class by Olly Gray

In Rowan class, we have been doing English, Maths, Art, Drama, Music, Outdoor Learning, ICT, RE, PSHE, D&T, History, Science, Geography, and PE. In English, we have been learning about Poetry and writing down poems.

In Maths, we have been learning about how to measure angles and some new shapes. In Art, we have been learning about Frida Kahlo and making our own food recipes with Clay.

In Drama, we have been doing some Drama games' and making some Drama in groups' and then showing it to the other groups' in Drama.

In Music, we have been using a new app called 'CMPSR Swipe' to make some Music.

We went to the Electric Palace Cinema at Bridport to watch a Pantomime. The Pantomime was called 'Jack in the Beanstalk'.

We also helped the class get sweets from the sweet counter.

Olly



Thanks to Olly for this term's newsletter contribution. We have had a great term with lots of exciting things going on. Our recent trip to see 'Kangaroo' was also great fun – a nice treat. Wishing you all a very happy Easter holiday and hope you get out in the sunshine.

Natalie





Hazel Class

Hazel class have been very busy this term! Alongside our curriculum learning we have explored new off-site adventures, been on many woodland/nature walks and continued to work hard together as a team to create a positive working environment for us all to learn in.

This term we have all really enjoyed our Art sessions with Rachel in the afternoons, looking at different artists and techniques that we have all then had a go at ourselves! We have looked at the colour wheel and explored how to make primary and secondary colours, how to make colours darker and lighter using white or black paints and specific art techniques such as pointillism – where we created our own artwork by using tiny dots to create the effect of colour!



Since February half-term we have been lucky enough to go off-site each Tuesday and visit Kingcombe Visitor Centre with Jenny who has taken us on some fabulous (but muddy!) walks, allowed us to explore the mud kitchen and wildlife facilities and completed some engaging activities with us. Here are a few pictures of us enjoying the outdoors!





We hope you have enjoyed reading about just some of the things we get up to in Hazel Class! We are all very excited about our upcoming residential to PGL at Osmington Bay and look forward to sharing our adventure with you soon!

Hazel Class – Carrie, Charlotte, Carly, Louisa, James, Kayleigh 😊



Willow Class



In Topic on a Tuesday morning we focused on learning about people who help us, this included police officers, veterinarians, fire fighters, dentists and paramedics. We watched informative videos on what they do to help us and dressed up as them too.



In Sensology we have been learning about the solar system. We created a sun, moon, earth and lots of different planets but Willow class enjoyed building their own rockets the best, hopefully they are still on their way to the moon!



We celebrated pancake day in Willow class, everyone helped measure the ingredients and mix it all together. Some of us enjoyed the pancakes with sugar, lemon and yummy fruit!



Last Friday we celebrated Chinese New Year, the year of the horse! Willow class tried chow mein, noodles, spring rolls and prawn crackers. We are proud of every one of them for tasting, smelling or feeling new foods.



The weather is looking better, feeling much warmer and we are excited for the new term ahead.

Elm Class

This term has flown by and we can't believe that Easter is nearly upon us! The start of the year may have been dominated by rain, but that didn't stop us spending as much time as we could outside. We have continued our outdoor learning, doing our sensory circuits outside and trying to spend some time every break and lunch time outside too. The muddier the better!



We have been carrying on with our phonics learning as well as increasing our use of signs in class and all the children have engaged well with our weekly 'read and sign' sessions where each child shares a book with an adult and learns the signs and symbols featured in the stories. In maths this term we began by focusing on the concepts



of 'same' and 'different' and linking this to seasonal clothing such as matching mittens or pairs of patterned socks. We also sang lots of counting songs and used these to help us to count lots of seasonal sensory items such as snow and icicles. The children have progressed really well with matching numerals with different items. Now that Spring is trying its best to bloom we have shifted our attention to times of day focusing on morning, afternoon and evening as well as repeating patterns.



A firm favourite in Elm class is our twice weekly hydro sessions in the pool, in which we have gained in both confidence and excitement, and we are working on independence skills with showering and dressing. In PE the children have enjoyed exploring and using different equipment, alongside our individual therapy programmes using the trampoline, riding bikes and perfecting our swing skills.



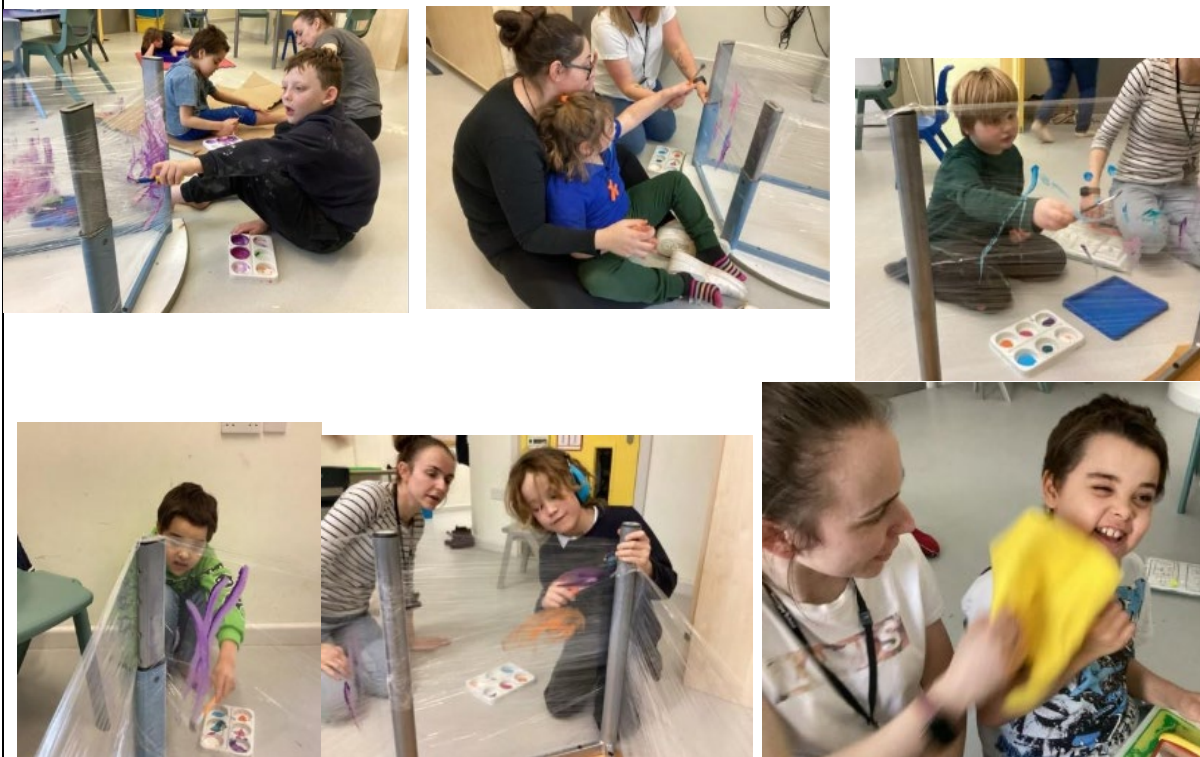
The children all engage wonderfully for our weekly Attention Autism 'Bucket' sessions as well as our sensory stories. Our winter story with lots of falling (flour) snow was very popular as too was our bouncy balls and bubble snake in Bucket.

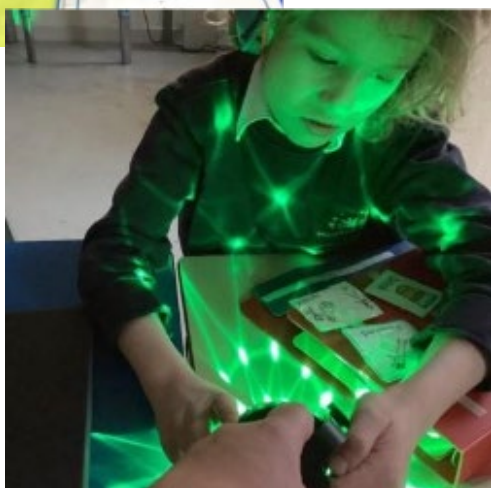




We love a bit of messy play in Elm and this term we have delved into rainbow ice, snow, both cooked and dry spaghetti, Weetabix, noodles, coloured rice, paint, cornflour and jelly to name but a few! The arrival of some new tuff trays was also gratefully received to further add to our exploration!

Our art sessions were largely been centred around our love of paint and we particularly enjoyed painting and rolling with cling film.





Sensology has been a real favourite this term. The children are really embracing using their 5 main senses to experience different things.

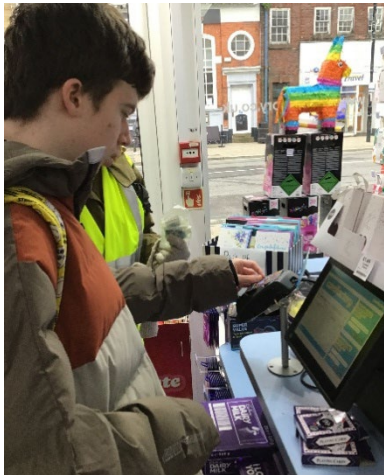
We have had fun joining in with the different events across the school this term, such as the 'Happy Puzzle Company' workshops which we enjoyed exploring, as well as World Book Day where we saw so many of our staff and peers dressed up as book characters. Not to mention, leading our own Valentines themed assembly too.

Hope you all have a good break. We're keeping everything crossed for some better weather.

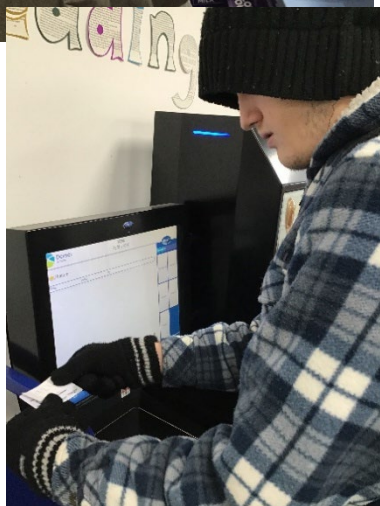
Emily, Mari and the rest of team Elm

Oak Class

Oak class have had a busy term. In spite of the relentless rain we were out and about being busy. The off-site visits continued. We have been taking shopping lists from home to Bridport to buy our items we needed using our payment cards or cash. A café visit is always a good experience too.



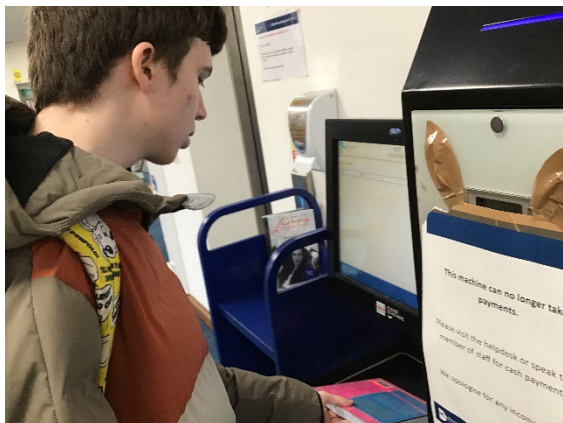
We joined the library by filling out the forms to get our library card and then borrowed books that we chose.



We have also explored further afield. Having successfully applied for Dorset bus passes we travelled to Lyme Regis on the bus.

We were lucky as the trip was planned for after the weather changed so we

enjoyed a walk along the Cobb, a snack overlooking the sea and we bought treats from the shops in town. On another day we had a lovely river walk and visited the Mill.





We have continued with our swimming at Crewkerne and are growing in confidence using the pool, learning how to behave around others and interacting with people in the session who greet us. We will be continuing with this through the summer term too.

In school we have continued with our life skills education by cleaning and tidying the flat. The bed has been rebuilt after some time away. We have one or two who were dab hands with Allen keys for future reference when you have the flat pack furniture to build!

We've also started looking at making meals for ourselves, using the microwave, toaster and a toasted sandwich maker. So far, the repertoire extends to jam or marmite on toast, beans on toast, cheese on toast, cheese toastie and cheese and ham toasties. Variations of these have been made and enjoyed across the term.



We have also continued our work in the garden and polytunnel, and even begun a bit of planting.

We're all looking forward to a sunny Easter break. Hopping you all have a lovely time and we'll see you for the summer term!!!

Oak Class team.

Juniper Class

What a brilliant term we have had so far! This term has been jam-packed with many functional skills activities with continuous enrichment activities such as walks to the park and group music lessons – which is a weekly favourite in Juniper class.

Alongside all of this, we have of course been working hard within our core subjects such as Science – learning about dinosaurs, Maths – counting and measuring ingredients for making a basic meal and English, with some great progress made from the students.

We also welcomed Ollie back to Juniper class. He has settled in very well and is making new friends in the class.

World Book Day was another one of our favourite days this



term.

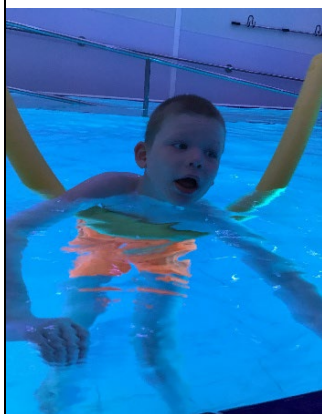
Everyone really embraced the idea of

dressing up and exploring some new and old books and stories within the classroom, as well as showcasing our costumes in the hall later that afternoon in our annual Mountjoy Catwalk!

With Spring on the way, we cannot wait to get out and about more and enjoy the

sunshine (fingers crossed we get to see it!), taking trips to the shops, purchasing items, and learning about money and how to pay using coins and the card machine.

We have continued with our Attention Autism sessions this term with everyone now working at Stage 3 with turn taking and some of us have just started Stage 4 where we carry out independent activities at our table. The children's engagement, anticipation and shared attention has increased massively!



In PE the children have been physically active every day with events such as hydro, rebound, physio plans, sensory circuits, and Friday's MOVE programme keeping everybody busy. The physical movement of our children in Juniper class is so important to help with mobility, co-ordination and strength which is why it is a key element in our daily activities.



I cannot believe we are already over half way through the school year! We are constantly amazed by how well the children are progressing with their communication, turn taking, social skills and confidence and cannot wait to see how much this continues next term. Have a fabulous Easter Break and we will see you when we're back.



School Council & Pupil Voice



© UNCRC Article 31

I have a right to relax and play

At Mountjoy we believe that every child and young person has a voice, whether it is verbal or another means of communication. We help children to communicate because we respect their right to be heard by adults.

ARTICLE 12: You have the right to an opinion and for it to be listened to and taken seriously.



Bev Thornton from Bridport Town Council came to the School Council meeting to tell School Council members about the upcoming visit to Dorset Council Chambers in Dorchester.

Bev showed the School Council the themes which the Bridport and area schools' collaboration had come up with after November's meeting at Bridport Town Hall.

These themes are:



Bev asked Mountjoy School Council which theme they wanted to choose to talk about at the upcoming Dorset Council Chambers visit in Dorchester. The School Council chose "Social Spaces", and they will write a short presentation on what they want to tell Dorset Council about making better social spaces for young people, their friends and family.

Unfortunately, the visit to the Council Chambers was cancelled in March. Hopefully, a new date will be found after the Easter break.

DORSET YOUTH VOICE



Bringing the young people of Dorset together

Pets as Therapy (PAT) dog



Diane Lawrence has kindly volunteered to bring her specially trained PAT dog, Sophie, to school. Sophie visits Mountjoy about twice a month. Sophie is a four year old Sheltie.

Therapy dog visits can be incredibly beneficial for pupils in special schools, offering emotional support, reducing anxiety, and creating positive learning experiences.

Therapy dogs can support pupils by:

- **Reducing anxiety and stress** - the calming presence of a dog can help pupils feel more relaxed and settled
- **Supporting emotional regulation** - interacting with animals can help children manage their emotions more effectively
- **Encouraging communication** - non-verbal pupils or those with communication difficulties may engage more readily with a therapy dog
- **Building confidence** - positive interactions can boost self-esteem and social skills
- **Creating sensory experiences** - particularly valuable for pupils with sensory processing needs
- **Supporting mental health and wellbeing** - schools have an important role to play in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their pupils

PAT dog visits integrate into the curriculum by linking to:

- PSHE and emotional literacy work
- Communication and interaction goals
- Sensory regulation activities
- Reading programmes (dogs make excellent non-judgmental listeners!)
- Life skills and community awareness



Pastoral Support Team



Sandra, Family Liaison Officer
Alison, Parent Support Advisor
Kate, SENDCo



School Counsellor Emily

National charity Family Fund has grants available for families living in the UK raising a disabled or seriously ill young adult, and living on a low income.

If you're the parent or carer of a disabled adult, aged 18 to 24, who lives at home with you, you may be eligible for a grant from the Your Opportunity programme.

<https://www.familyfund.org.uk/grants/schemes/your-opportunity/>

Grants range from digital devices, membership to a club, sports equipment, education materials, or even a musical instrument – whatever is needed the most.

The quickest way to apply is online. You can also download a paper application or request for one to be sent to you from Family Fund website.

To check if you're eligible, and find out more about what grant programmes are available please visit the Family Fund website <https://www.familyfund.org.uk/>



Family Fund
Helping disabled children

Leadership

As we move through the term, it has been wonderful to notice the first **signs of spring** appearing around school. Pupils have been spotting brighter mornings, birdsong, and new growth in our outdoor spaces. These seasonal changes provide rich opportunities for sensory learning—whether that’s exploring colours and textures in the garden, noticing changes in the weather, or enjoying time outside as the days slowly get warmer. Spring is always a lovely reminder of new beginnings and the amazing progress our pupils make every day.



This term we’ve also seen fantastic engagement in our **hydro pool sessions**. The hydro pool continues to be a valuable resource for many of our pupils, offering a safe and supportive environment where they can develop physical confidence, practise motor skills, and experience gentle exercise without the strain of weight-bearing. The warm water helps with relaxation, regulation, and wellbeing, and many pupils benefit from the calming sensory experience the pool provides. It has been a joy to watch pupils grow in independence, communication, and enjoyment during these sessions.

If you would like to volunteer to help out in hydro please get in touch with me or Vicky Reed to have a chat about it.

We look forward to more learning, laughter, and spring sunshine as the term continues.

Richard Bowskill, Assistant Headteacher

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday, 13 th April	1 st day of summer term
Monday, 4 th May	Bank Holiday
Friday, May 8 th	Mountjoy Nature Day
12, 13, 14 May	Parent / Carer meet the teacher afternoon
25 th – 29 th May	Half term
Wednesday, 1 st July	Sports Day
Sunday, 5 th July	FOMS Summer Fair
Thursday, 25 th June	Year 11 Prom and Leavers’ Assembly
Saturday, 27 th June	You Do Music and Sing and Sign Choir group at the B Sharp Festival in Lyme Regis
Tuesday, 30 th June	Pupils performing at Beaminster Music Festival
Wednesday, 22 nd July	Last day of term

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Sponsored Mile Challenge sponsorship form

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