



THE RUSSELL SCHOOL



NEWSLETTER



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SCHOOL INFO

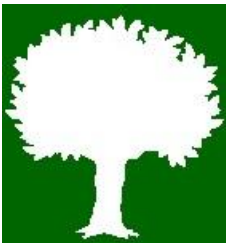
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SCHOOL CALENDAR



Headteacher's Update:

Dear Families,

As our first term draws to a close, we have so much to celebrate and be thankful for:

Our **Nursery** children have blossomed, grown, developed friendships and learned to work together and listen to each other.

Our **Reception** children have made huge strides with their phonics and numerical understanding. They have developed independence, perseverance and resilience.

Our **Year One** children have become extremely independent learners and their writing is developing exceptionally well.

Our **Year Two** children have developed their concentration and perseverance – learning how to edit and improve their work.

Our **Year Three** children have taken the move upstairs with ease. They are working together and supporting each other when things are challenging.

Our **Year Four** children have shown themselves to be role-models to the whole community, as displayed in our community tea.

Our **Year Five** children have developed independence and resilience, as displayed on their trip to Sayer's Croft.

Our **Year Six** children have stepped up to the responsibility of their roles with remarkable maturity.

We have had many opportunities to showcase the talents and learning of the children and it has been lovely to see our new baby grand piano in use.

Our Winter Fair was a huge success, making just shy of £4000 for the school! Thank you to everyone for making this happen.

A lot of work has been going on behind the scenes to continue to advertise and promote the school. Thank you so much to Christina and Nick at puffinbot.com and a huge thank you to the many, many parents and carers who have given their time and expertise to help the school grow and flourish this year. Your support is a huge part of what makes The Russell School so special!

We are looking forward to our growing partnership with Footy Fun 4 Kids. If anyone is looking for childcare for Inset Day on Monday 5th January 2026, they are providing it for us on-site. We know this will be a successful partnership, supporting local families!

In the new year, I will continue to be supporting Marshgate Primary whilst their Headteacher remains unwell. This partnership continues to offer opportunities and financial support to us at The Russell.

I have a number of safeguarding-related notices / resources below to support families over the period during which the school is closed.

I finish with a huge thank you to each and every one of you. I am so proud to be part of this community. The Russell School is a really special place and that is because of all of you. A Happy Christmas and a Happy Hanukkah to our families who are celebrating and I wish you all a restful and restorative break.

Laura Brooks

Addressing Attendance:

I hate to end the term with a negative tone, but it is important to be fully transparent with the whole community. **Attendance at The Russell School is below the national average and well below the average for schools in Richmond.** Whilst there will always be unforeseen circumstances and illnesses, there will also be times when children may be feeling a bit under the weather or a bit sleepy, but this does not mean they should not be coming into school.

In order to ensure we are building resilience and allowing our children to understand that some days may be tougher than others, we need to work as a team around the children and promote, champion and value school attendance. There are 45 schools in the local authority whose attendance data is captured and shared and we rank as 41st. This is exceptionally concerning as our context and cohort does not differ significantly from many of the schools against whom we are ranked.

Attendance really does matter. Missing occasional days leads to gaps in understanding and it is not always possible or feasible for those gaps to be back-filled. Much like watching a series on Netflix (or whatever your streaming service of choice may be) if you miss one episode, the plot is tricky to follow and the overall experience is confusing. Occasional days matter as much as prolonged periods of absence.

As a mother of teenage children, I know first-hand the struggle that presents itself in the morning. I know how stressful and overwhelming it can be to encourage reluctant children into school but it is a struggle that we need to be facing because if we don't, we may be making it harder in the long term to get our children into good attendance habits.

For children for whom the struggle is prolonged and significant, we will always work with you and support you and seek external support if necessary as well. We will also look at how we can ease the busyness of the morning drop off or the overwhelming excitement of pick up time. We want to find strategies and solutions to support you but we ask that you ensure your children are in school every day that they are fit and well enough to be.

Here's to a healthy spring term, with much-improved attendance data for all!

Staying Safe online over the holiday period:

As you know, we will be going Smartphone-Free from September 2027 and in preparation for that, I urge you to consider this during the gifting season! In order to ensure our children are safe online and parents / carers are in control, I've re-attached below the QR codes to put safeguards on your children's devices.

For those of you whose children do have phones, please remind them of the impacts of sharing images online. We talk to the children about this in school but it remains an area of concern and vulnerability so please reinforce the message.

Setting parental safeguards on your child's devices

If you're viewing this on a screen, tap (or click) the appropriate icon below.

If you're looking at this on paper, point your phone's camera at the appropriate QR code and tap the link that appears.

Follow the instructions on the website exactly, in particular setting the age of the child.

We recommend you set the device not to allow *any* apps or games to be installed without your permission.

Protect your settings with a strong password that is not known to the child.



Safeguarding in school and at home:

In school, we talk to the children frequently about who they can talk to if they have any worries and we advise children to take their concerns to adults in school however, the children also know that there are four named adults in school who lead on safeguarding. If any parents or carers have any safeguarding worries, they can also speak to one of the named adults below, or if concerns arise out of school time, please use one of the numbers / services below.

Are you concerned about a child's safety?

Who shall I talk to?



Laura Brooks - Headteacher
Designated Safeguarding Lead



Nicola McCann - Deputy Headteacher
Deputy Safeguarding Lead



Heather Clarke - Inclusion Lead
Deputy Safeguarding Lead



Danielle Povey - Safeguarding officer
Deputy Safeguarding Lead

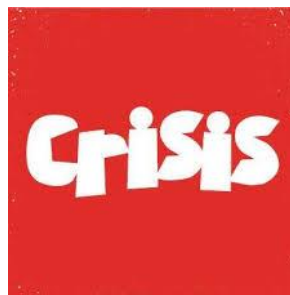
What else can I do?

Contact Single Point of Access Team (SPA) -call us between 8:00am - 5:15pm, Monday - Thursday, and Friday between 8:00am - 5:00pm 0208 547 5008 or call the out of hours duty team (evenings and weekends) 020 8770 5000

- or call 999 if you think a child is in immediate danger
- Childline telephone number – 08001111
- NSPCC Helpline – 0808800500

Russell Children go Busking!

We had a wonderful time singing carols and festive favourites at Richmond Station last Tuesday, where our voices — supported by beautiful harp and flute accompaniment — put plenty of smiles on commuters' faces. The children from Breakfast Choir Club sang their hearts out and really enjoyed the experience. We were raising money once again for the homelessness charity *Crisis*, and we're thrilled to share that we raised £118.28! A big thank-you to everyone involved, especially our amazing parents, and of course to Mrs Thomas, supported by Manon and Parry on harp and flute.



Last Tuesday after the fabulous carol singing at Richmond Station, our Year 5s went on to The Woodville Centre in Ham. They sang carols, rang bells and spread festive cheer among everyone. Really well done Year 5!

Carols and Christmas Cheer!

On Tuesday, we enjoyed our annual carol concert at St Peter's Church. This is a tradition that has been in place for over 20 years now! It was a joyous celebration of music, messages and community. Thank you, as ever, to Mrs Thomas and our amazing musical parent helpers for making this happen! The picture below shows Samunnat and Will, Year 5, sharing their words of positivity and hope.



Sports Captains Round Up:

We have successfully won ALL of our football and netball matches. To start with, the girls played a football match against Deer Park and won 2-1 and the boys played against Deer Park too and won 5-4 after coming back from a 4-1.

We also played against St Stevens in a netball match and won 2-1. We have some upcoming matches in the next term.

Until then- MERRY CHRISTMAS! From your Sport Captains: Gabi, Jason and Nelly

Nursery

Over the past fortnight, the children have been bursting with excitement as they arrived to a magically transformed nursery, ready for the Christmas countdown. Our days have been filled with festive creativity, joyful stories and plenty of songs. The children showed wonderful imagination while decorating their own Christmas stockings using a variety of materials, designing snowmen from play dough, and writing letters to Santa. This seasonal excitement sparked lovely discussions, giving the children opportunities to share their thoughts and ideas with confidence.

Amid all the glitter and cheerful carol-singing practice, we continued our phonics learning by focusing on the phonemes s, a and t. The children enjoyed engaging games involving listening and identifying initial sounds. We also added an advent calendar to our morning routine, giving a daily opportunity to practise counting and number recognition.



Reception

What a term it's been for Reception! We have thoroughly enjoyed our topic, 'Autumn is here (and Winter is coming)' and we have enjoyed exploring all the changes that were happening in our environment during our Outdoor Learning sessions. We were lucky enough to experience the snow fall, and feel ice in the water tray, watch leaves change colour and make them crunch. We have loved learning outside and observing changes first hand. We have also loved learning about all the different celebrations that happen during this season, including Yalda Night, Hannukah and Christmas! We also enjoyed reading the traditional tale, The Gingerbread Man. We joined in with the repeated lines and re-enacted it with the children bringing the characters to life, as the sly fox and cheeky gingerbread man. We also enjoyed making our very own vegan gingerbread men! We looked at a recipe and how it was set out with ingredients and equipment columns. We checked we had everything we needed before we got started and children helped at every stage, making sure to wash hands in between. We then designed the icing before actually having a go ourselves, knowing that we could make changes if we wanted to.



Year 1

We have had a fabulous last few weeks! The children worked incredibly hard to finish off their stories by innovating the story of Beegu. It has been lovely to see the confidence the children are gaining in their learning. We have also been very busy getting ourselves ready to dance and sing our hearts away. We hope you enjoyed the show as much as we enjoyed performing it and I am so proud at how brave all the children were to get up on stage in front of an audience. I hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and a happy new year and I look forward to hearing all about your adventures in the new year!

Year 2

What fantastic and busy first term it has been! Year 2 have settled into the year amazingly and have worked hard to create some amazing pieces of work, from their brilliant narratives, to adding two-digit numbers, to the many different landscapes they have created in art. The last few weeks we have been busy practising our singing and dancing getting ready to perform to the audience for our KS1 and Year 3 Show. We hope you enjoyed watching and thank you for your support. I hope you all have a lovely break and get some well-deserved rest.

Year 3

Wow! What a wonderful way to end the year. The children worked so hard to deliver an amazing show. I do hope you were able to make it to one of the performances. If not, I'm sure the children will be able to tell you all about it. Thank you for helping them to learn their lines and prepare their costumes. Watching them grow in confidence and independence throughout the show was a joy to be part of!

After a very busy couple of weeks, as 2025 draws to a close, we take time to reflect on the happy memories so far in Rachel Carson Class! The children have worked enthusiastically this term and have earned a good rest. We look forward to seeing them return next year for more hard work and enjoyment! It has been a wonderful privilege getting to know all your children. Thank you to all the parents/carers who have been able to help with trips this term, including Richmond Museum, Panto and the Carol Concert. We are very grateful. We look forward to our Egyptian themed topic in January and to a fun filled 2026. Thank you for all your kind wishes and support and we hope you all enjoy a restful holiday with your family and friends.



Year 4

What a fantastic end to the term we have had in Year 4! We have enjoyed conducting experiments to investigate the digestive system and causes of tooth decay, honing our prediction and observation skills. The children then used what they had found out to write their explanation texts on the stages of digestion. Thank you for all of your hard work this term Year 4, I hope you enjoy your Christmas break and I can't wait to hear about it in January!

Year 5

As the Autumn Term comes to an end, we want to reflect on what has been a busy and memorable term for our Year 5 children. One of the biggest highlights was our residential visit to Sayers Croft, which was a huge moment for the children and a fantastic opportunity for them to develop independence, resilience, and teamwork. Alongside this, they have worked incredibly hard in school and shown growing maturity in the way they have approached their learning. Although the term has been long and many are understandably feeling tired, they have continued to give their best each day. We are extremely proud of everything they have achieved and would like to thank our parents and carers for their continued support.

Year 6

What an incredible first full term it has been for Year 6! The class have made a fantastic start to the year: showing determination, enthusiasm and commitment to their learning. The children have confidently performed their first-class assembly, taken part in several sporting tournaments with great success and have shown dedication to their monitor jobs.

Year 6 have also completed their first set of SATs mocks and they should take huge pride in their focus and hard work during this period. Across the curriculum, the children have shown curiosity, teamwork and creativity resulting in multiple pieces of work being displayed around the school.

The class should be very proud of everything they achieved this term. We look forward to an exciting Spring Term as we begin our World War II topic. Keep up the brilliant effort Year 6 and for now enjoy a well-deserved holiday.



FOOTY FUN
4 KIDS

BREAKFAST CLUB

7:45 AM - 8:45 AM

- Early drop-off from 7:15 AM
- Porridge
- Fruit and cereals
- Toast and spreads
- Fruit smoothies
- Fun activities

AFTER SCHOOL CLUB

3:15 PM - 6:15 PM

- Late pick-up till 6:45 PM
- Sports
- Creative arts and crafts
- Dance
- Outdoor activities
- Themed rewards
- Cooking and baking
- Healthy meals
- Gardening
- Snacks and drinks

☎ 0330 229 0566 ✉ gary@footyfun4kids.com 🌐 www.footyfun4kids.com

HAM FEVER

At St Richard's Church, Ham, TW10 7NL
on Saturday 17th Jan 2026, 3pm until 9pm

Fundraising to fix the church's leaky roof!



A fabulous afternoon and evening dance party. DJ Si will be spinning a variety of tunes from the 1960s through to 2025 plus synchronised dances for you to learn, courtesy of Aerolatino

18 and over welcome



Children welcome
with an adult

Scan the QR code to purchase a ticket and for more information



Upcoming dates for Spring term

5.1.26	INSET day – school closed for children – Footy Fun 4 Kids offering childcare
6.1.26	Children return to school. Gates open 8.30am
10.1.26	Open Morning
30.1.26	Year 4 class assembly 9.00am in the hall. All welcome
5.2.26	PTA film night for children in the hall from 4.20pm. More details to follow
6.2.26	Number Day in school
13.2.26	Final day of half term. School closes at normal time (3.15)
23.2.26	INSET day – school closed to children
24.2.25	Children return to school. Gates open 8.30am
25.2.26	Year 6 Young Voices at the O2. More details to follow
5.3.26	World book day and the start of 'Readathon.' More details to follow soon.
6.3.26	Year 2 class assembly 9.00am in the hall. All welcome
9.3.26	Science week
11.3.26	Year 3 trip to Royal Festival Hall. More details to follow
17.3.26	Parents / Carers' eve 3.30 – 5.00
19.3.26	Parents / Carers' eve 3.30 – 7.00
25.3.26	Isle of Wight Info eve for Year 6 families. 6.00pm
27.3.26	Last day of term. School closes at 1.45pm
13.4.26	Children return to school. Gates open 8.30am