THE RUSSELL SCHOOL



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Headteacher's Update:

Dear families,

And just like that, our first half term comes to a close – and we have so many positives to reflect upon. The children have settled into their new classrooms, built new friendships and developed new skills. We have welcomed parents and carers into school for workshops, parents/carer meetings, curriculum talks and more. As a whole school, we have spent lots of time thinking about relationships as part of our new whole-school values. This has been reinforced through our *Rights Respecting* Lens. We have been out and about on trips. We have welcomed some phenomenal visitors into our assemblies. Our school is enriched by connections to some remarkable people and the children have benefitted from hearing their stories as part of Black History Month. Please note – there is more to come! And last but not least, we have really enjoyed getting to know our new families and we are all very grateful to all families for their engagement, support and advice.

Thank you to all of you who attended our first parents / carers' eve of the academic year. If you didn't make it, we will be in touch to see if we can set up an alternative meeting as it is such a valuable experience. After half term, your children will be moving on to new topics and areas of learning. Do talk to your children about their learning highlights of the first half term and please do look at the curriculum information on our website.

The Friends of the Russell School have been very active. Thank you to those of you who joined us for our AGM last night. We will send separate communications about PTA activity and fundraising focus for the year after half term however I wanted to share some **Tree Fort updates**! As many of you know, getting the necessary upgrades done on the tree fort has proved to be exceptionally difficult, with most contractors unable or unwilling to take the work on. Even Kier, who managed the build of the new Clarendon School, were unable to help. It has been an ongoing frustration for me and the maintenance team, and for the many parents and carers who have tried to support. However, **I have positive news!** Aimee Woods, our new School Business Manager has already had two different teams in to inspect and advise. We have a new quote in the pipeline and this will help to get some traction on the project! Please be assured – this isn't something we don't prioritise, and hopefully, things are moving in the right direction! With PTA in mind, please get **Friday 4th December in your diaries for our after-school Christmas Fair.**

I'm delighted to share with you all that, following a successful bid process, we have **been awarded £1000, as part of David Attenborough's 100th birthday celebrations** across the local authority. This has only been awarded to ten schools across Richmond so we are delighted that our bid caught their eye! This money will go towards developing an outdoor learning zone near the reading hut. Those who joined our PTA AGM have already heard about these plans.

Thank you to families for being so understanding with Monday's later start to the school day. In situations like this, we have to make decisions which, although very disruptive to families, are necessary in order to ensure we can operate safely. We really value the strong partnership we have with our families at The Russell Primary School, and we know that open communication is key to supporting your child's learning and wellbeing. We want to make sure that all conversations between home and school – whether in person, by phone, or via email – remain respectful and constructive and we urge you to use AI tools with caution as they can often over-complicate issues and this can affect the smooth-running of the school. Our staff are committed to working with you to resolve any concerns and we ask that all communication is courteous and solution-focused. If you have any questions or worries, please don't hesitate to get in touch with your child's class teacher or the school office, and we'll do our best to help. By working together respectfully, we can create the best possible environment for all our children to thrive.

This Tuesday was a bitter-sweet day of music and celebration, as the whole community came together to wish Mrs Povey all the best as she moves on to the next chapter of her life! Some photos are below.

This afternoon, we welcomed a team of visitors to the school, including historical reenactor Russell in full Roman costume, scriptwriter and filmmaker Cressida, and our resident historians John and Eleanor. They were working with Year 4 to explore how we know about the Romans in Britain, and how we can create exciting teaching resources to help other pupils in other schools to learn about the past. More to come after half term with Anglo-Saxons and Vikings -- watch this space!

Thank you to all of you, as ever, for supporting the school. We have had a great first half-term and I look forward to the next half. But first, I hope you all have an opportunity to enjoy some rest, relaxation and family time.

Laura Brooks

Our Safeguarding Priorities.

Every year, we set **three safeguarding priorities** and this year's are shared below. These are influenced by national and local contextual priorities, but are bespoke to our school. If you have any safeguarding concerns, please use our dedicated email address below. This address is managed by the safeguarding team – Ms Brooks, Mrs McCann and Mrs Clarke

safeguarding@russell.richmnd.sch.uk

The Russell School
Safeguarding Priorities
2026 2027

1 Ensuring safe use of technology – both in school and in the community.



We're helping children develop a healthy relationship with technology and understand how to stay safe online. This includes:

- Teaching children about appropriate screen time and the importance of balance
- Helping them recognise and respond to online risks, including inappropriate content and contact from strangers
- Supporting children to understand online safety issues including cyberbullying, online grooming, and the risks of sharing images
- Creating a mobile phone-free environment during the school day to help children focus on learning and building face-to-face relationships

How you can help at home:

- Set clear boundaries around screen time
- Use parental controls on devices
- Encourage offline activities and family time
- Report any concerns to us immediately

2 Promoting equality – both in school and in the community.



We're committed to creating a school community where every child feels valued, respected and safe, regardless of their background. This includes:

- Teaching children about diversity, equality and respect through our curriculum
- Challenging any racist language or behaviour immediately
- Celebrating the diverse cultures and backgrounds within our school community
- Ensuring staff are trained to identify and deal with safeguarding issues, including discrimination
- Creating safe spaces for children to talk about their experiences and feelings

How you can help at home:

- Talk positively about diversity and difference
- Challenge stereotypes and prejudice when you encounter them
- Celebrate different cultures and traditions as a family
- Report any incidents or concerns to us so we can address them quickly

3 Supporting mental health and wellbeing



We recognise that good mental health is essential for children to thrive. Our approach includes:

- Developing and implementing a whole-school approach to mental health and wellbeing
- Training staff to spot early signs when a child might be struggling
- Teaching children strategies to manage their emotions and build resilience
- Providing support for children who need extra help

How you can help at home:

- Talk openly with your children about feelings and emotions
- Look out for changes in behaviour, sleep patterns or mood
- Encourage healthy habits like regular exercise, good sleep and balanced nutrition
- Let us know if you have any concerns about your child's wellbeing

Working together for safe, happy and successful children

Being inspired to do amazing things!

Celebrating the worlds of music, sport, advocacy, leadership and law, below are some images from a selection of the visitors who have given up their time to come and inspire us with their stories of success, creativity, aspiration and achievement. With huge thanks to Johnny Byamungu, Ansel Wong, Michele Beute and Dex Marchan.









So much going on!

Our Year 6 and Year 1 students recently teamed up for a wonderful shared reading session. It was fantastic to see our oldest pupils guiding and encouraging their younger reading buddies, fostering both a love for books and a great sense of community across the school.



Our Early Years and Key Stage 1 students leapt into action during an exciting, high-energy drama workshop. The children loved transforming into their favourite superheroes, using their imagination and teamwork to save the day while building immense confidence in their speaking and performance skills.



Year 4's day of historical immersion!

Below are some images, hot off the press, of today's immersive day of historical discovery!









Some spook-tacular fun at our PTA-run gardening club!





Celebrating Mrs Povey









A bit of rain didn't dampen our spirits and we celebrated Mrs Povey with music, cake and visits from members of the community old and new! Thank you to those parents and carers who supported us with executing her celebrations and thank you to those of you who joined us for one final song in the playground! As we all know, she won't be a stranger and she will always be part of The Russell School community.

Some half term inspiration

https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/500-words



Help us to continue to thrive:

The Russell School Education Fund (RSEF)

The Russell School receives its funding from the government on a per-pupil basis, but student numbers are much lower across the UK than they have been in the past – and Ham is an area which is particularly affected by this issue. **We currently have 25 spaces across the school which accounts for over £100,000 of funding.**

School budgets are being stretched to cover increasing overheads, meaning the school must make difficult decisions on what can be prioritised.

The RSEF is allocated at the discretion of our amazing headteacher Ms Brooks to invest in the future of our school, and to ensure we can continue to provide a creative, exciting curriculum for our children.

We really appreciate the contributions of existing donors, and we understand that some families are not able to donate to this voluntary fund.

Each year we will update parents and carers on how the money is spent.

As a guide, a donation of £1 or £2 a day per child would make a huge difference. Anyone who is unable to make this level of donation is of course welcome to contribute a smaller amount, and larger donations are greatly received if your circumstances allow.

Together, we can achieve great things.

Gift Aid

Gift Aid is a government scheme that allows us to claim back 25p for every £1 you donate, **at no extra cost to you**. If you are a taxpayer, you can opt to add Gift Aid to your donations.

If it's easier, simply scan the QR code below:

However you choose to contribute, your help is always gratefully received.

Warm regards,

Friends of The Russell School

Nursery

This half term we have welcomed many new children. Everyone has been learning to follow routines and make new friendships and relationships. It has been a lovely start with plenty of sunny warm days so the children have really enjoyed exploring our outdoor area. The weather has more recently turned colder and wetter but this has not stopped the children being outside jumping in puddles and making various creations in the mud kitchen. It is lovely that we now have the artificial grass area under cover and the roof on the mud kitchen meaning we can still enjoy the outdoors whatever the weather.
This week we have been out looking for signs of autumn in our school grounds and collecting interesting objects. We have also carved out a pumpkin and explored painting and washing pumpkins too. We are definitely ready for a rest in half term but are really looking forward to seeing all the children back in November.



Reception

It's been a spooky end to the term for Reception where we have been making up spells and exploring pumpkins in the lead up to Halloween! The children have been busy being witches and wizards, making their own spells and using their phonics to write down everything they added to their cauldron. They also enjoyed scooping out the inside of a pumpkin and used words such as slimy, slippery and gooey to describe what they were feeling. It's been an amazing term for the children, who have taken to phonics and maths time with curiosity and excitement, eager to build on their knowledge. They have also learned so much when playing with peers, sharing resources, building on language and negotiating with words in a respectful way, in line with our Class Charter. Although we still need a few reminders, we have come a long way since the start of term! Good job Reception.

Year 1

What a fantastic first half term in Year 1! The children have settled into their new environment beautifully, working hard to learn our daily classroom routines and spending plenty of time getting to know each other to build a kind, collaborative community. In our English lessons, the class dived into traditional tales and absolutely loved rewriting their own imaginative versions of The Enormous Turnip. Meanwhile, our young mathematicians have shown incredible determination and are already experts in the subject, having completely mastered the part-whole model to break down numbers. We are so proud of how well they have transitioned into Key Stage 1 and cannot wait to see what they achieve in the next half term.

Year 2

Pochard Class have had a fantastic time learning across the curriculum! In English, the children have written recounts of our key text, *The Knight Who Wouldn't Fight.* Linking this to their DT learning about sliders and levers, they designed and created moving posters to help them retell the story to the Year 1 children. They were incredibly proud to share their work and bring the story to life!

We have also been learning all about Hinduism and Diwali, the Hindu festival of light. The children enjoyed creating a whole-class puja tray and producing informative fact files to share their knowledge. During our computing lessons, the children developed their research skills by exploring information about Diwali using Google Classroom handouts and watching a documentary. This research helped them to deepen their understanding of the festival and prepare for their fact-file writing. It has been wonderful to see their curiosity, creativity and enthusiasm shine through in all their learning!

Year 3

A busy start to our Year 3! It has been great fun getting to know all your children and we have settled well into our new school year. We have enjoyed learning all about the Stone Age this half term. We loved our trip to Richmond Museum and also enjoyed welcoming our historical experts in to class. This gave us an opportunity to experience life in Stone Age Britain by knapping soap to create useful tools, making cave drawings using a range of resources and constructing our own miniature Stone Age monuments – a very exciting start! We have been making our own Stone Age homes, using materials we foraged from the playground too! In English we were able to sequence important events, using fronted adverbials in our writing and we have been using our speaking and listening skills to help nominate our wonderful Year 3 Do-Righters. Well done to everyone who bravely put themselves forward. Thank you for attending Parents / Carers' Evenings. If you were unable to attend, please do not hesitate to contact me via the office to arrange an appointment when we return next half term. I hope everyone has a restful and enjoyable break and I look forward to seeing everyone for the busy new term!





Year 4

This term, the Sparrowhawks flapped, glided, and soared into an action-packed curriculum! In PE, they mastered timing and agility through spy-themed dance moves and fast-paced handball. Maths saw the children strengthening their number skills and expanding their understanding of addition and subtraction while discovering clever new mental and written strategies.

In English and History, they explored the lasting impact of the Anglo-Saxons on British towns, showcasing their creativity through epic narratives and clever Kenning riddles. The classroom was completely electrified during Science and DT as the children investigated circuits and engineered their own working night-light lighthouses—complete with handmade switches! Finally, in PSHE and RE, the class reflected on equality, democracy and human rights while learning about the inspiring Sikh concept of *Sewa* (selfless service) and how we can support one another.

After a whirlwind first term of getting to know each other and diving into our learning, everyone is certainly ready for a rest! Thank you for all your support at home, and enjoy a relaxing break.



Year 5

What a busy first half term we have had in Robins! It has been lovely getting to know the children and seeing them settle into Year 5.

In English, we stepped into the world of *How to Train Your Dragon*, where the children invented their own dragons and wrote detailed non-chronological reports. We then travelled back to the Viking Age, exploring myths and creating our own stories filled with mysterious settings and mythical characters. Our Viking journey continued in history, where we investigated evidence to decide whether the Vikings were raiders, traders or settlers.

In maths, we have been busy exploring decimals, building our understanding of tenths, hundredths and thousandths. Science has been full of investigations, from testing different materials to exploring reversible and irreversible changes.

In DT, the children have been putting their coding and engineering skills to the test, designing and building their own Micro:bit steady-hand games.

It has been lovely getting to know the Robins and watching their confidence grow over the past few weeks. They have worked hard and have much to be proud of. Thank you to all our families for your support, and I hope everyone enjoys a well-deserved half-term break!

Year 6

What a fantastic first half term Year 6 have had! We have concluded our history topic of the Victorians by debating whether they did or did not make Britain better and coming to reasoned conclusions based on the impact of the Industrial Revolution on modern-day Britain. We have been practising these skills in English, where the children have written balanced arguments based on our class novel, Wild Boy. The children look forward to sharing everything they have learnt with you at their class assembly! Additionally, in DT, the children have been looking at pulley mechanisms and built their very own lifting devices that were both innovative and functional.

I hope you have a lovely rest over the half term break Year 6, and I look forward to seeing you soon!



AfC Virtual School
'Together we can achieve!'

Are you raising the child of a relative or a friend?

Whether you have a special guardianship order, child arrangement order or no legal order in place, you and your child are eligible for support and advice to help with education.



This could include:

- Pupil Premium funding
- advice and support from AfC Virtual School
- advice and support from other organisations

For more information, please contact Rebecca Lloyd at AfC Virtual School or the designated teacher in your school.

Email: rebecca.lloyd@achievingforchildren.org.uk

achieving for children

National Trust



Half Term at Ham House and Garden

Cabinets Unlocked: Sensory Explorers

24 Oct - 1 Nov 2026

Our unique cabinet collection at Ham House and Garden has been unlocked this autumn! We invite you to explore these special cabinets with our sensory activities. Enjoy the autumnal gardens and seasonal crafts.

nationaltrust.org.uk/hamhouse

Love Ham Pond?

Come to the Big Pond Prune



10:00am Saturday,
7th November
Meet at Ham Pond

Tools provided but bring your own if you can.

HAM and PETERSHAM
Ham and Petersham Association and Amenities Group

Everyone welcome.

Please come along to help.

Upcoming dates for the term

1.11.26	Children return to school. Gates open 8.30am
5.11.25	Year 5 History Workshop
8.11.26	Diwali
9.11.26	Reception – Year 6 flu immunisations
11.11.26	Year 5 Sayers Croft until Friday
16.11.26	Anti-Bullying Week and Road Safety Week
19.11.26	Year 6 History Workshop
23.11.25	Year 3 Safer Walking Training until Friday
3.12.26	EYFS and KS1 Panto – in school performance
4.12.26	Hanukkah Assembly Christmas Fair in the hall after school
8.12.26	Yr 1 – 3 Winter Play – afternoon performance
9.12.26	Yr 1 – 3 Winter Play – morning performance
10.12.26	Human Rights Day KS2 trip to Rose Theatre
11.12.26	Christmas Jumper and Christmas Lunch
15.12.26	Carol Concert at St Peter's Church
17.12.26	EYFS parent and carer singalong in the hall (time tbc)
18.12.28	Last day of term. **School closes 1.45pm**
4.1.27	INSET day – **school CLOSED to children**
5.1.27	**Children return to school.** Gates open 8.30am