



# THE RUSSELL SCHOOL



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## A NOTE FROM MS BROOKS

Headteacher's Update

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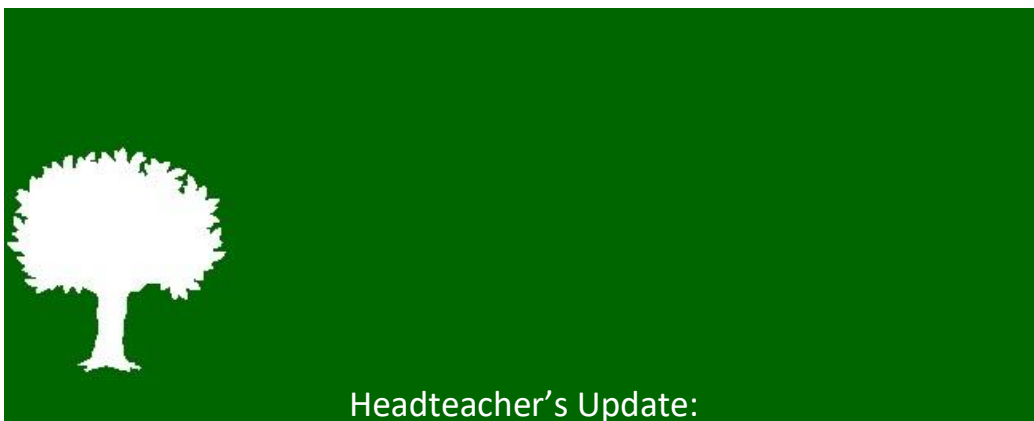
## SCHOOL SUCCESSES AND CELEBRATIONS

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND SCHOOL CALENDAR



Dear families,

The second half of the autumn term is whizzing by and we have much to celebrate! Just this month alone, our Year Four children have hosted our annual community tea where friends and families were treated to tea, cakes and musical entertainment. A big thank you to the parents and carers who supported with this event. Our Year Five children have been to Sayer's Croft residential centre, enjoying lots of new experiences and pushing themselves outside of their comfort zone. We have welcomed lots of families into Nursery and Reception for our autumn stay and play session and we welcomed lots of Year 1 – 6 parents and carers into classrooms to enjoy looking at their children's work.

As you know, two weeks ago we had a fantastic day of filming with Public Health Richmond, to create a feature piece about our journey to become a Healthy Schools Bronze certificate holder. We look forward to sharing the completed film with you all soon.

Last Monday, we were delighted to welcome Jerlean John, Minister of Works, Transport and Infrastructure and current Acting Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago. Not only of political significance, she is also grandmother of two of our pupils! Ms John re-arranged her exceptionally busy schedule to come and talk to us all about her journey from childhood to where she is now. We were so grateful to hear such a powerful story.

Last Wednesday, Dave, accompanied by guide dog Faldo, from Pets as Therapy, came to talk to the children about his experience as a sight-impaired person and he shared how Faldo supports his every-day life. From January, Faldo is going to be part of our team, listening to children read and working with individuals.

We hope those of you who attended last Thursday's Piano Recital enjoyed the event as much as we did. It was truly magical to hear the beautiful piano, surrounded not only by families from our school community, but also families from the local area. A full write-up is below.

Having just finished hosting last week's Piano Recital, our amazing PTA are now hard at working getting everything together for next Friday's Christmas Fair. Please do come along after school and join us for some festive fun, games, refreshments and more!

As part of our ongoing Rights Respecting work, our school council have re-named themselves the '*Do-Right-ers*' and as part of Anti Bullying Week, two weeks ago they delivered a whole-school assembly, sharing how to be an upstander rather than a bystander. I spend lots of time popping into classrooms and I am always proud of what I see; children listening to each other, engaging with the learning, and challenging themselves to aim higher. When we think about respecting ourselves and others, we must remember the impact that the online world can have. If your children have access to phones, tablets or other devices, I urge you to ensure that you have the appropriate settings in place to ensure that the children are only accessing age-appropriate material. For the families who celebrate Christmas, please do think about the impact of tech-based gifts – especially phones. We know that many parents and carers at The Russell are in agreement with us that smartphones are detrimental to the wellbeing of primary-aged children so please do consider this when gifting. If your children walk to school by themselves, a 'brick' phone can give peace of mind. We will be doing more work around online safety and smartphone-free childhood in the New Year, with a view to being a fully smartphone-free-childhood school from September 2026. I have included some QR codes below to support with this.

Thank you for all your support,

*Laura Brooks*

Headteacher

We are delighted to share an exciting development in our **Rights Respecting Schools** journey.

### Creating Our Class Charters

At the start of this academic year, every class has created their own unique class charter. This has been a collaborative process where adults and children have worked together to develop a shared understanding of rights and respect for rights. Working from the UNICEF Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), children in each class have explored which articles are most relevant to them. Through democratic discussion, each class has chosen a set of articles on which to base their charter.

### Rights Holders and Duty Bearers

For each article chosen, the class has agreed specific actions that:

- Children, as 'rights holders', will take to ensure their rights and the rights of others are respected
- Adults, as 'duty bearers', will take to ensure that rights are realised and protected

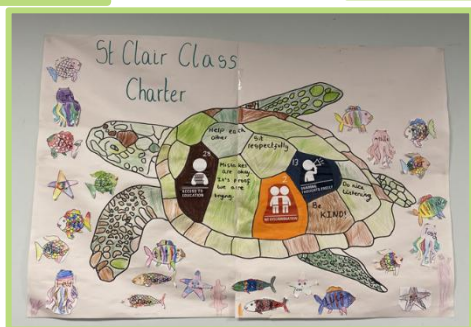
This approach helps everyone in our school community understand their role in creating a safe, respectful environment where all children can thrive.

### Our Class Charter Displays

Each class has created an attractive display of their charter, which you can see around the school. These visual

reminders  
rights every

help reinforce our commitment to respecting  
day



## Sporting Successes – the children's voice:



In the past two weeks we have participated in multiple sporting events and will be doing more in the future. To start with, we completed the Bushy Park run and did very well -thanks to Mrs Knight for taking us and Mrs Rose Doyle for organising it. Also, we participated in the girl's football match against Meadlands and were VERY successful as we won 5-0! We have an upcoming netball match on the 3rd of December and a football match on the 2nd of December against Deer Park.

Written by Sport Captains: Anthony, Gabi and Nelly.





# Sporting Successes – A Round Up

A group of children in Year 5 children have been trained as sports leaders by Mrs Nangle from Sport Impact who comes in on Mondays. As a culmination of their training, they ran a festival for the Year 3 Class. This was a success for all the children.

**‘Sport Leadership has been an amazing experience for us, and we hope Year 3 enjoyed it too. We made our own sports games for the Year 3s to play, and it was fun learning how to be leaders. We would love to give this opportunity to the current Year 4s now, as we think they would really enjoy it. It has been a joy to make, play, and share our own games. Mrs Nangle has been so kind in giving us this opportunity and sharing her equipment with our school. We are extremely grateful for this brilliant experience, and we would really love to thank her for all her hard work training us and helping us achieve our goal.’ By William and Maaike**

## Cross Country-Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November

9 children from years 5 and 6 took part in the Richmond Borough Cross Country championship at Bushy Park.

Special mention to Gabi who finished 8<sup>th</sup> out of 175 runners and Thaddeus who finished 19<sup>th</sup> out of 192 runners!

The girls team finished 9<sup>th</sup> out of 31 schools which is an amazing achievement.

We are proud of all the runners-Adam, Kuzey, Thaddeus, Anthony, Jace, Gabi, Nelly, Ellie, Maaike.



## **Girls' Football Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November**

The girls team played their first league match against Meadlands.

The result was **The Russell 5-0 Meadlands.**

Goals scored by Nelly 4 and Gabi 1

## Sporting Successes – Thea, Year 5

Thea bagged a very well-deserved under 10 girls win at the SE regional Cyclocross championships last Sunday. She battled through slippery muddy conditions on a very technical circuit at Cyclopark in Gravesend to sustain a commanding victory. Despite the challenging conditions she said it was her favourite race of the season so far. Well done Thea – we're very proud of you!



# 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.



# A Magical Musical Moment:

Just over a week ago, The Russell's hall was transformed into a beautiful, festive concert space as we welcomed families and friends from the local area. We were celebrating something very special: our brand-new Yamaha baby grand piano, and to mark the occasion, we were fortunate to host world-travelling concert pianist and music-education advocate **Alexandra Dariescu**, who demonstrated the full range and character of the piano in her performance.

Before the main performance, our school choir opened with a lively warm-up performance, filling the hall with excitement. A huge thank you goes to all the parents who helped transform the hall, to everyone who baked treats or prepared mulled wine, to Mr O'Hara for his help, and of course, to all who attended to support the event.

Alexandra was joined by actor **Tom Clare**, whose narration of *The Nutcracker* brought the story to life with humour and warmth. Alexandra played familiar pieces like the *Dance of the Sugar Plum Fairy*, *Dance of the Reed Flutes*, and the *Pas de Deux* with flare and virtuosity and it was hugely inspiring for our students to be so close to the action!

Earlier in the day, Alexandra and Tom performed an interactive, abridged version for Years 1, 2, and 3, along with visiting pupils from Strathmore School—who, by coincidence, are learning about *The Nutcracker* this term. The children enjoyed joining in with gestures and movements from the story.

The success of the concert also introduces the prospect of the school's hall and new piano in hosting rehearsals and performances to external businesses in the future, potentially becoming a useful source of income for the school.

Alexandra is, by now, abroad touring her full show *The Nutcracker and I* (with a ballet dancer and digital animation), but both Alexandra and Tom hugely enjoyed being part of this special, celebratory evening. It was an evening that will hopefully stay with the Russell community for some time!





# Nursery

Over the past couple of weeks, our learning has focused on the changes we see in nature and the idea of hibernation. Each morning, the children have been busy observing the weather and admiring Mr Frost's beautiful creations outside.

We explored the story "Don't Hog the Hedge" and learned all about what means for animals to hibernate. A sensory version of "We're Going on a Bear Hunt" encouraged the children to retell and recall events from the story while exploring a range of natural materials.

The children especially enjoyed following the footsteps of our visiting "bear guest", comparing their own footprints to the bear prints and using comparative language such as smaller and bigger. It has been a wonderful time of seasonal learning, discovery and imagination.



# Reception

This week in Reception, we have been talking about hibernation. In our book of the week, **The Boy and the Bear by Tracey Corderoy**, the bear goes missing after sending a paper boat message to the boy saying 'I Must Go'. We later found that the bear returned in the spring time. After some deeper exploration, we discovered that the bear had gone into hibernation for the winter. We talked about all the other animals that go into hibernation and decided to help make them a place to sleep in the classroom and outside! During our Outdoor Learning session, we found a perfect spot for a bear's den. We used material and pegs to make the structure and then collected lots of leaves to make it comfortable.

We hope bear has a nice nap!



## Year 1

Year 1 have had a fantastic couple of weeks. We have been learning new sounds in phonics, including split vowel digraphs. The children are becoming much more confident in their reading and we have been working hard on using our expression when reading. In science, they have had fun exploring different types of materials and looking at their properties. To continue our space project, we have been learning about the solar system and the different planets, which has inspired us to create some art work. In English, we are currently reading the book 'Beegu' and we are looking forward to creating our own narrative.

## Year 2

This fortnight, Year 2 have been busy with lots of exciting learning and activities! We were very lucky to watch a beautiful piano concert featuring music from The Nutcracker, which inspired lots of smiles. We also had great fun playing outside in the falling snow—it was a magical moment for everyone! In maths we have been exploring different addition and subtraction skills, working hard to become confident number detectives. In art we have been focusing on creating our own landscapes, experimenting with colour and texture to bring our ideas to life. We also finished our colourful leaflets all about Brazil, showcasing what we've learned about this amazing country. As the weather continues to get colder, please remember to wear a coat every day.

## Year 3

Another busy fortnight in Year 3. We have been learning all about the countries that make up the UK and using an atlas to locate their capital cities on a map. We have been comparing Edinburgh and London and recognising some of the physical and human features of each city. We have been using all this information to create a detailed non-chronological report. In science, we have been working in small groups to identify and label our human skeletons. We are excited to begin practising our songs and lines for the school production at the end of this term. Look out for the dates in the newsletter!

## Year 4

Year 4 have worked exceptionally hard over the past couple of weeks. They have been really enjoying their class text, Varjak Paw, and this has provided great inspiration in their descriptive writing, culminating in a very well-structured diary entry. In maths, they have been continuing working on their addition skills, focusing on the column method and working hard to ensure place value is correct. Well done Year 4!

## Year 5

Year 5 returned from Sayers Croft tired but proud after a wonderful three days of outdoor learning and teamwork. Last Friday we held our class assembly, where the children performed brilliantly. They worked hard to recreate what it was like to be at Sayers Croft and shared their adventures and challenges with great confidence. In class, we have continued with our exciting topics in English, geography and science. We are currently writing our biographies about Ernest Shackleton, and the children have enjoyed digging deeper into his incredible survival story and learning more about the continent of Antarctica. In science, we are exploring Earth and Space and the pupils have been asking thoughtful questions about the Sun, Earth, Moon and

beyond. In art, we learned about the work of space-inspired artist Peter Thorpe, and the children used his bold, colourful style to create their own two-colour poly-tile prints. The results were fantastic. We are very proud of how hard the children are working this term and how maturely they continue to approach new challenges. Well done, Year 5!



## Year 6

Over the past fortnight, Dibb Class have been working incredibly hard on their biomes topic. Their growing geographical knowledge has helped them develop a deeper understanding of the world around them. This learning has also enriched their English work: pupils have produced fantastic non-chronological reports on creatures from different biomes and they are now creating their own narrative adventure stories set in a biome of their choice. Their writing has been vivid, descriptive and filled with action and dialogue. In maths, the children should be very proud of their achievements in division. They have shown great perseverance while tackling both short and long division. Keep it up, Dibb Class!





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

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**T:** 0300 131 2797

**W:** [achievingforchildren.org.uk/  
contact-fostering](http://achievingforchildren.org.uk/contact-fostering)



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for children**

# ESOL

## With creche

**Fridays (term time only)**

**10.30am to 12.30pm**

If you are interested in free English classes with a crèche and would like more information, please call Banres Children's Centre on 07904 556423. This group is for learners at Level 1, requiring a basic understanding of English.

**67b Lower Richmond  
Road, Mortlake  
SW14 7HJ**







**Join us**

**30 November**  
Bushy Park

**14 December**  
Sandown Park  
Racecourse



[santafunrun.pah.org.uk](http://santafunrun.pah.org.uk)



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## NOTICEBOARD

### Upcoming dates for Autumn term

5.12.25	Christmas Fair in the hall from 3.30pm
10.12.25	YR 3 – 6 Panto trip EYFS – Year 2 Panto (on-site)
12.12.25	Christmas Jumper and Christmas Lunch day
16.12.25	Carol Concert at St Peter's - 10.30am
17.12.25	EYFS Singalong – 9.00am KS1 Festive production – 1.45pm
18.12.25	KS1 Festive production – 9.15am
19.12.25	Final day of term. Finish at 1.45pm
5.1.26	INSET day – school closed for children
6.1.26	Children return to school. Gates open 8.30am