



Ropley Church of
England Primary
School

Autumn 2 Newsletter



What an incredibly busy half term it has been! The children have been splendid in their Christmas performances and it was lovely to have so many parents and grandparents join us for these special events.

With music recitals, two nativities, our Christmas service, Carol service, Christmas lunch, Father Christmas Grotto, choir events, supporting the local community, and of course, the usual day-to-day learning - it is no wonder the children and staff are ready for a break. As always, thank you to our hard-working staff for enabling all of these fantastic experiences and opportunities for the children.

You may have seen the most recent league tables for schools have been published and Ropley CE Primary School has been confirmed as the 14th highest performing school in Hampshire!

Our vision is for every child to flourish both academically and personally. With so many exceptional independent schools across Hampshire, we strive to ensure our pupils get the same chances in life as in the private sector.

Whilst the school's focus is on ensuring children flourish academically, we are proud of how we promote and encourage children to be well-rounded individuals in an ever-changing world. Our Christian values help to develop children's courage, confidence and resilience. Children are actively encouraged to appreciate and love God's world, and to reflect on how they can make lives better for others. As pupils leave Ropley CE Primary, they leave with a deeper understanding of how love, community and courage can support them in life.

As the school's headteacher, I am excited for the next few years. We are proud to offer our pupils an equivalent offering to that of the independent sector. After all, why should money determine the quality of one's education?

I hope all our families have a wonderful break and we look forward to seeing you all again in 2026. A reminder, we're back on Tuesday 6th January 2026!

And for those of you who attended today's Carol Service...Happy Easter.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Mills'.

Mr D Mills

Headteacher

Nativity



Parents and grandparents were entertained by the children's beautiful singing and acting in this year's nativity performance. Thank you and well done to the staff who supported such a wonderful event.

Christmas Carol Concert



We enjoyed our Christmas Service on Thursday and the Junior Christmas Carol Concert on Friday this week. Well done to all the children and adults involved. Both services were wonderful!

Christmas Lunch



The children enjoyed their Christmas lunch in the hall. With the older children, we managed to set a new record of opening 120 Christmas crackers in unison! We look forward to beating that record next year. Thank you to all the staff who supported serving the children on a very busy day!

Sporting Achievements



Basketball Winners

We are delighted to announce both our Year 3/4 and Year 5/6 team won their basketball tournaments. The Year 5/6 team are representing East Hampshire in the Hampshire finals in May whilst the Year 3/4 team retain their title of the best in East Hampshire. Well done to all the children who took part.



Football Success

Well done to the Year 5 and 6 team who represented the school at the Alton Football Tournament in November. The children were a strong team and made it through to the final. With just seconds to spare in the final, Ropley conceded their first and only goal. They had a great time, displaying excellent team spirit.

Racket Sports, Agility Festival and Cross Country Wins

Well done to Ruby who represented the school at the cross-country competition held at Medstead; she came 2nd place! A huge well done to the children who represented the school at the Agility Festival held at Amery Hill and those who took part in the racket festival at Eggers.



Links with St. Peter's Church



We were delighted to have been invited to a service in Basingstoke to welcome the new Bishop Kelly. Some of our pupils attended on behalf of the school to present gifts which represent our Christian values. The school presented Bishop Kelly with a smooth stone to represent courage: the stone was used to represent the story of David and Goliath. A first aid kit was presented to represent love; to remind us of the parable of the good Samaritan. Finally, we presented a bread maker. Bread is an important symbol in the Bible, in our village of Ropley and at church.



Bumblebee Class had their first visit to St. Peter's Church and met with Reverend Amber. The children had the opportunity to explore the church and ask questions.

Ropley CE Primary School were delighted to participate in the Christmas Tree Festival at the church. Children designed and created their own Christmas tree decorations which reflected our values and these were presented on a tree.

The tree had photographs of Love, Courage and Community seen in school, as well as prayers and reflections written by the children. There was a train around the base which represented the Watercress Line which was suggested by one of the Year 3 children.

We would like to thank Janet Glover and Pam & Jack Francis for their sponsorship to enable us to take part.



Supporting the Local Community



Bishop Sutton Memorial Service

Some of our pupils represented the school at the Bishop Sutton Memorial Service in November. The children laid a wreath on behalf of the school to commemorate the soldiers who lost their lives in World War I, World War 2 and the Korean War.

Thank you to everyone who supported the poppy appeal. We raised £131.27.

Brendon Care Visit

We were delighted to continue our visits to Brendon Care Home in Alton this half term. The choir, accompanied by some students from Perins, performed to the residents. It was lovely to spread some festive cheer this season.

Quote:

“Thank you so much for the concert you put on for us. The residents really enjoyed it, they were talking about how talented the children were! So, a big thank you to all the children.”



Children in Need

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Children in Need fundraiser; we raised £207.50 for the charity.

Flying the Flag at new housing development in Alresford

You may remember last term children entered a competition to design a new flag for the housing development in Alresford. Oliver's design was chosen and you can now see the banner flying as you enter the housing estate.

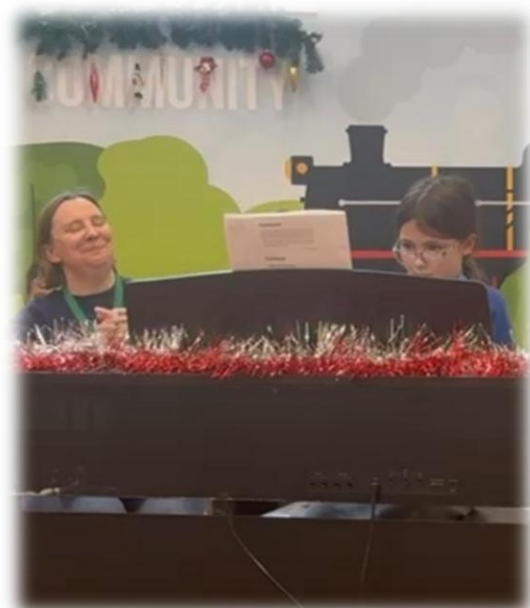


Musical Performances



It has been lovely to see our music curriculum going from strength-to-strength this year. Our children have weekly singing lessons with Mr Max Hardie in addition to their weekly music lessons in class. We've welcomed Joya this term to lead our choir and we're looking to further develop this next year.

We continue to provide a vast array of peripatetic, and we enjoyed music recitals for drums, piano and violin this half term.



Our Wider Curriculum

As the school continues to increase our standards in English and mathematics across all year groups, we too are continuing to raise the status of our wider curriculum offering. Below is just a small snapshot of some of the fabulous learning this half term.

Bee Keepers (Year 6)



Year 6 have been learning Street Dance in their dance lessons; designing and creating wooden shelters in their Design & Technology unit; comparing Winchester to Las Vegas in Geography; examining the differences in the Magi according to different Gospels in Religious Education and studying light in Science.

Pollinator (Year 5)



Year 5 have looked at whether Jesus was the Messiah in Religious Education; studied space in Science; explored the works of Van Gogh in Art & Design and started creating video adverts in computing.

HoneyComb Class (Year 4)

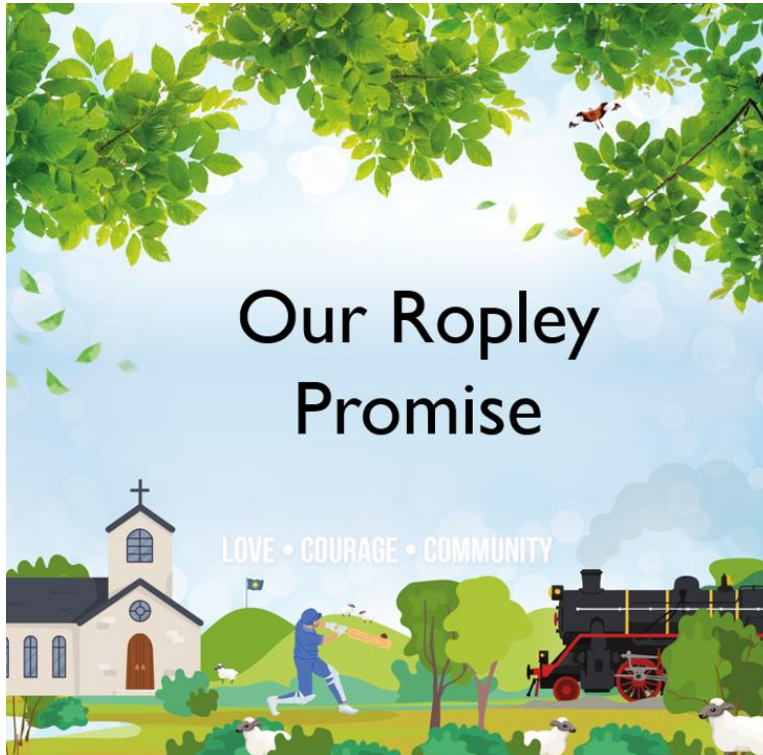
Year 4 have designed and created pop-up books in Design & Technology; studied the French resort La Plagne in Geography; learned all about digestion in Science and studied positional language in French.

Nectar Class (Year 3)

Year 3 have been studying animation in their computing lessons; learning all about volcanoes in geography; exploring rocks and fossils in Science, and making their own soup in Design & Technology.

The Ropley Promise

Did you know we have something called 'The Ropley Promise'? Our promise encapsulates the rich range of personal, social and cultural opportunities which we believe every child has the right to experience. The seven-year journey that children embark on across the school provides an excellent foundation for later learning and life. Below are things we promise children will have had the opportunity to do at our school before they leave us.



- Experience a residential trip
- Have the opportunity to take part in a variety of water sports such as kayaking, canoeing and paddleboarding
- Run an enterprise project
- Visit the seaside
- Gain a cycling award
- Hatch and care for animals
- Dance, sing and perform
- Learn a musical instrument
- Take part in sporting events
- Travel on a train, boat/hovercraft and coach
- Visit a variety of places of worship
- Supported the local community

Reading at Ropley



Promoting the importance of reading continues to be a big focus here at Ropley! For children in Years 3 to 6, we have our 'Rainforest Reading for Pleasure Scheme' – if you do not remember what this is, it is a selection of 20 books for each year group which are highly recommended. There will be a special treat at the end of the year for those children who have read them. For our younger children, we have invested £5000 in new phonics books so children have higher-quality phonetically decodable books to send home. Some children may also be talking to you about 'Rapid Read' – this is a specific reading intervention to support both fluency and comprehension – this is again, another investment of £1200. Please keep up the reading – it is the most important skill we can give children.

Visit from Hugh Bonneville

We had the pleasure of welcoming acclaimed actor and children's author Hugh Bonneville for a special visit that lit up the school with excitement and inspiration. Known for his roles in *Downton Abbey* and *Paddington*, Hugh brought a new kind of magic to the classroom—his passion for storytelling.

As part of the school's ongoing commitment to reading for pleasure, Hugh spent time in classrooms chatting with pupils about their learning journeys. The highlight of the day was a lively chat show-style conversation in the school hall where Hugh answered a wide range of thoughtful and curious questions from the children. Hugh started the event by apologising on behalf of Paddington Bear who was unable to make the talk as he was more than likely on the hunt for marmalade sandwiches. Questions posed to Hugh ranged from his youth acting to how he got into writing his first book.

The day was extra special for Hugh as he was celebrating his birthday. The school presented him with handmade biscuits of his new book, *Rory Sparkes* which were designed and baked by Camilla's Kitchen.

The visit culminated in a captivating reading from Hugh's new children's book, *Rory Sparkes and the Elephant in the Room*, leaving pupils spellbound and eager to dive into their next adventure in reading.



Pure Joy at Ropley!



Fundraising



A huge thank you to Frogs, Tadpoles and Class Representatives for their support with fundraising this term. The Grotto made £1205 profit; the calendar made £1930 profit; the second-hand clothes sale made £122.50; film boxes made £157 profit; Ropley Craft Market made £260 and the Christmas raffle made £2000. This means we have raised £5674.50!

How you can support us

Free Meal Shortfall

Did you know, free school meals are not actually free for the school?! The school receives £2.61 for every child in EYFS, Year 1 and Year 2 which means the school has a shortfall of £1275.75 each year. When you factor in utility bills, staffing and our contract with CaterLink, the shortfall is closer to £4000 (£23 per child). If your child has a free school meal and you'd like to make a shortfall contribution, this would mean more money could be spent on supporting the children.

Curriculum Resources Contribution

Quite a few schools ask for termly contributions from parents to cover the costs of in-school activities. We have an ambitious and exiting curriculum for our children at Ropley. If every parent donated £30 per year, this would reduce our curriculum cost by 40%! If you would like to make a contribution, Scopay does allow for this.

EYFS Forest School Area Update

We are currently designing our next exciting development at our school! We are currently raising funds to be able to build an Early Years Forest School Garden.

This area will be dedicated to our Early Years and KSI children to enable them to explore, enjoy and develop their curiosity, physical stamina, gross motor skills, creativity and communication skills, through a dedicated outdoor learning environment.

With funding that has already been committed to the project, we are looking forward to starting this build in the Spring Term so watch this space!

More photos on our website here:

Early Years and KSI Nature Area



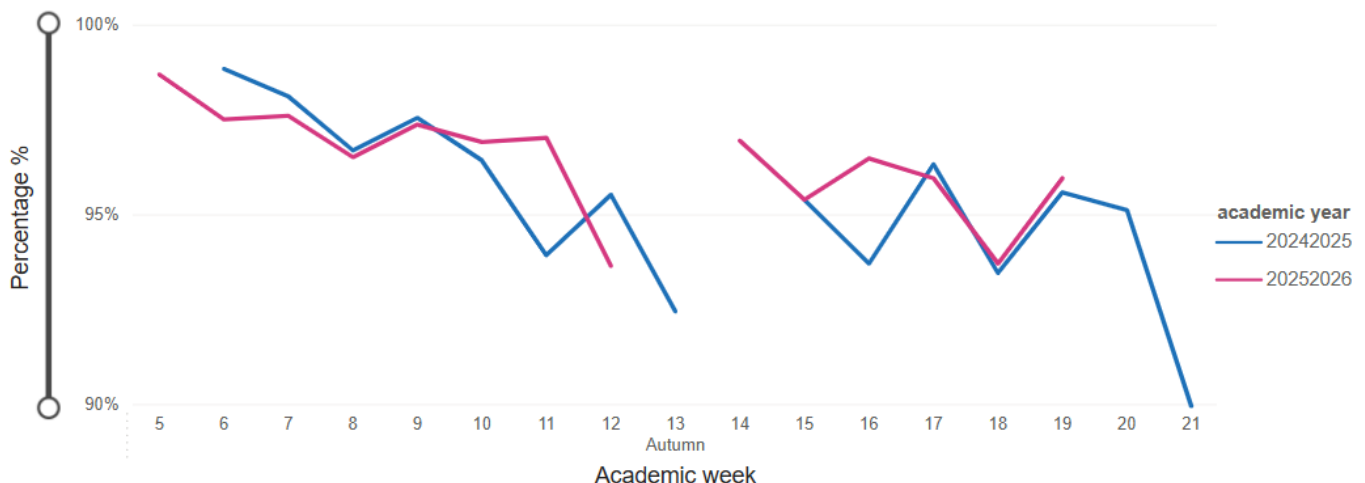
Funding raised so far: £52, 000. This means the school only needs £8000 more which we hope to achieve by further sponsorship from local organisations. If you know a company who may like to sponsor, please do let us know; we are very happy to install permanent plaques from sponsors in the garden.

Attendance

The Department for Education and Ofsted require all schools to monitor and report on absence figures. Our school's attendance this term is 96.1% which is a dip of 1% since last half term. The graph below, from Hampshire County Council, explains the impact of this on children's learning. Children who fall below 90% attendance are classed as at extreme risk of underachievement.



The below graph, provided by the Department for Education, shows our school attendance trend so far this year compared to last year. It would be great if we could follow the current trajectory of remaining above last year.



We understand that children do get unwell sometimes and have other reasons for absence, but we really encourage parents to bring children in, even if they are under the weather. The office team can help administer Calpol and will always give you a call if they are not well enough to stay in school. Many thanks for your support with this.