



# Headteacher's Update

For some, January can feel like a dark and gloomy month—but not for King Offa. The energy and enthusiasm that define our school have remained strong. With rising attendance and improved outcomes, our community continues to flourish, and after another action-packed term, I am delighted to share a few highlights in our first newsletter of 2026.

This term, our focus has been on **Opportunity**. At the start of January, while many were making New Year's resolutions, I invited our whole school community to consider how they could recognise and seize opportunities ahead. The ambition and determination shown by every pupil at King Offa has been clear. What has impressed me most is that their aspirations have centred not on material goals, but on helping, supporting, and developing others. This speaks volumes about our families and staff, whose care and kindness are deeply woven into our school culture.

Earlier this academic year, our Year 1 and Year 2 pupils relaunched the Daily Supported Reading programme. Early reading is a central priority in our school improvement plan, and I am proud to say that we are making excellent progress.

As we reach the halfway point of the year, the majority of our Year 2 pupils have now graduated to the junior Destination Reader programme, and our Year 1 pupils are progressing at the nationally expected rate. Building strong foundations in Early Years and Key Stage 1 is key to raising future achievement, and I want to thank all families for reading regularly at home—your support makes a remarkable difference.

## Inside this issue:



**Who won The Great King Offa Bake Off?**



**Meet the School Council!**



**Learn about safer internet usage at home.**

At King Offa, we set and maintain high expectations for behaviour through a whole-school approach. This term, we revisited this commitment by reintroducing our 5-Star Behaviour Expectations as a guide for all pupils:

- Always try your best
- Follow instructions
- Make choices that are good for me, good for you, and good for everyone
- Use kind words and kind hands
- Be in the right place, at the right time, doing the right thing

Throughout the term, we have closely monitored how these expectations are being met. We are pleased to see that almost all pupils have consistently maintained their 5 stars. On the rare occasions when a star is lost, pupils, supported by staff, have quickly returned to meeting expectations. Behaviour at King Offa is already good, and together, we are raising it to an even higher standard. I would like to thank our entire school community for their commitment to this shared goal.

With spring just around the corner, I look forward to leaping into Term 4 with continued energy and enthusiasm.

Yours faithfully,

**JAMES TOWNER**  
Headteacher,  
King Offa Primary  
Academy



# Safer Internet

On 10th February, we celebrated Safer Internet Day, with this year's theme being:

**“Smart tech, safe choices – exploring the safe and responsible use of AI.”**



In school, pupils took part in age-appropriate activities and discussions about staying safe online and using technology responsibly. As part of this, children learnt about what artificial intelligence (AI) is, where they might encounter it online (such as in games, apps, search engines, and recommendations), and the importance of making smart and safe choices when using technology.

We have focused on helping pupils understand that while smart technology and AI can be useful and exciting, it is important to:

- Think carefully about the information they see online
- Use technology respectfully and responsibly
- Understand that not everything online is accurate or appropriate
- Ask a trusted adult for help if something feels confusing or worrying

## How parents and carers can support at home

You can help reinforce these messages by:

- Talking with your child about the apps, games, and websites they use and how technology makes choices for them
- Reminding them not to share personal information, including passwords
- Encouraging them to check with an adult before using new apps or online tools
- Setting clear boundaries around screen time and device use
- Using parental controls and privacy settings where available

By working together, we can help children develop the skills and confidence to make smart, safe choices online.



# The Great King Offa Bake Off

Connected to this term's theme of opportunity, pupils were invited to channel their creativity through cakes in the Great King Offa Bake Off. In the first round, all pupils from Year 1 upwards decorated a cupcake using icing and an assortment of sweet treats. The four hundred cakes required for this stage were generously prepared and donated by the wider King Offa family. A huge thank you to Miss Hesmer and her son Nathan, as well as Mrs Towner and Miss Towner, for making this possible.

Once the decorating was complete, Mr Towner selected a winner from each class—a task made extremely challenging by the exceptional standard of entries. Pupils had clearly reflected on how opportunity could be represented through vibrant colours, imaginative patterns, and uplifting messages of optimism.

## Class winners:

Y1 – Charlie, Y2 – Iris, Y3 – Leah, Y4 – Harley, Y5 – Alanta, Y6 – Rosie

## Finalists:

Y1 – Ivy, Y2 – Florence, Y3 – Theo, Y4 – Lennie, Y5 – Leila, Y6 – Alex

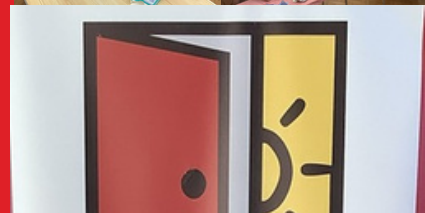
From each year group, one pupil was then chosen to compete in the grand finale.



In this final round, finalists were joined by a family member to create and decorate a large traybake. It was wonderful to see the joy and enthusiasm shared between families, with contestants showing both competitive spirit and genuine support for one another's creations.

The final was judged by Mrs Pocock from the Aurora Academy Trust, along with Local Academy Board members Gemma and Claire. They faced another tough decision due to the outstanding quality of the cakes. After careful deliberation, the judges selected Ivy from Year 1 as the overall winner, praising her colourful design and its inspirational message: "Reach for the stars."

The cakes were later enjoyed by classmates as they reflected on the opportunities they hope to embrace in the year ahead. Thank you to all families for your support, enthusiasm, and generous donations toward fundraising for the KS2 playground.



# Opportunity Year Group Update



## Nursery

The children have had lots of opportunities to learn through play—working together to explore similarities in size, talk about different colours, and compare amounts by matching them to the correct numbers. Through these experiences, the children are building early mathematical understanding in a way that feels natural, engaging and enjoyable. In Mathematics, the children begin to recognise size, colour, quantity and early number concepts. In Communication and Language, they develop new vocabulary and practise talking with friends to share their ideas. In Personal, Social and Emotional Development, the children learn to take turns, work together and show confidence as they try new challenges. Learning through play gives every child the opportunity to explore, discover and develop at their own pace. We are so proud of how curious, enthusiastic and engaged the children have been.

## Reception

This term in 'Understanding the World' Reception has been learning about how to care for those around us and our environment. Within this, pupils have explored how to care for animals in the winter. In classes, we discussed the different things they need and how we can help birds during the colder months. Reception pupils were very eager to help care for the animals and enjoyed having the opportunity to create their own birdfeeders to put in our outdoor environment.

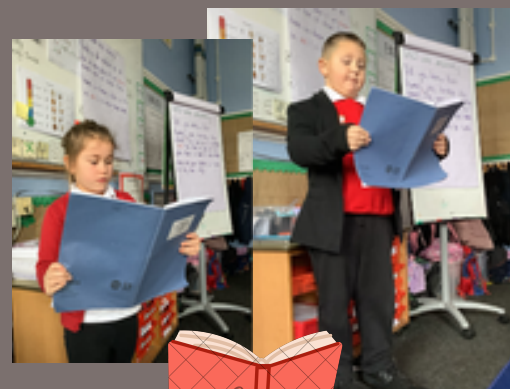


## Year 1

Pupils in Year One have taken the opportunity to develop their skills in Gymnastics. We have been learning three different shapes to make with our bodies such as 'tuck', 'straight' and 'star'. Over the term we have developed our confidence when using large apparatus. The children have also been learning to observe and give praise to one another and identifying different ways to make these shapes.

## Year 2

Pupils in Year 2 have taken the opportunity to extend their knowledge in English. This term we have been focusing on the texts 'Dear Earth' and 'If all the world were...'. Pupils have learnt about endangered animals and researched facts about them. Pupils have written persuasively about the problems facing the Earth and have thought of solutions that could be adopted. They confidently read their persuasive speeches to the class and discussed the how small changes can make a big impact on the world!





## Year 3

This week in year 3, we had the **opportunity** to meet a Roman called Cassius. He introduced us to his Roman soldier's kit. We learnt about the Roman battle formations and tactics, as well as doing an archeological dig to look for artefacts. There was also the **opportunity** to write like a Roman scribe and play some of their board games. The day was incredibly fun and enhanced our current History topic, helping us to learn even more about the Roman invasion of Britain.

## Year 4

In year 4 this term, we have started a new Science topic: Electricity. Both classes really enjoyed investigating and making circuits. There was great excitement when the bulbs lit up and the buzzers sounded! We have also learnt about keeping safe with electricity and now know that a switch is a break in a circuit and can be made from different metal and non-metal objects.



## Year 5

Pupils in year 5 have been enthusiastic to learn about the artist Barbara Hepworth and how she is inspired by nature to create pieces of art and sculptures. We have used soap as a medium to carve, creating soap sculptures with nature as inspiration. Many of the children tried to include a hole through their sculpture as Barbara Hepworth frequently created space with a view as she believed the space to look through enabled connections between forms. Many of our children found soap carving to be a therapeutic and mindfulness task, please do have a go at this with your children, we look forward to seeing more soap sculptures in the future.

## Year 6

In Clarke Class, pupils met the directors of Trivela, an online maths game. They had the opportunity to showcase their maths skills to Guy and Chris, as well as ask questions about setting up a company and launching an app. Watch out, Dragon's Den! Meanwhile, in Parks Class, pupils have been seizing every opportunity for extracurricular learning. Hydraulic hands have been built, figurines painted, cartoons drawn, tent pegs carved and five mile walks proudly completed! Here are our pupils with their amazing creations!



# School Council

We are pleased to share that our new School Council have been working hard with classes across the school to help decide next term's Accelerated Reader prizes. Council members spoke with their classmates, gathered ideas, and fed these back during meetings, ensuring that pupil voice played an important role in the decision-making process.

This collaborative approach has helped us choose prizes that motivate and excite our readers, while also showing how children can make a positive contribution to school life. Well done to the School Council for their enthusiasm and commitment.



## Time 2 Dance

Time 2 Dance prides itself on giving children of all ages the opportunity to dance and experience performing in a professional theatre. The festival began in 2002 with just six schools taking part, and it has grown year on year. By 2025, an impressive 41 schools performed across three action-packed performance days.

King Offa first took part in 2016 and has proudly participated every year since, with each group bringing enthusiasm, creativity and commitment to the stage.

Representing the King Offa 2026 squad was our wonderful Year 3 team, who performed a routine to the title song from a new musical Six. Six tells the story of the six wives of Henry VIII like you've never heard before, reimagining their lives through modern music and empowering storytelling. Their performance perfectly links to this year's festival theme, 'The Past', celebrating history through music, movement and creativity. We look forward to sharing pictures with you once they are shared with us in term 4.



# Children's Mental Health Awareness

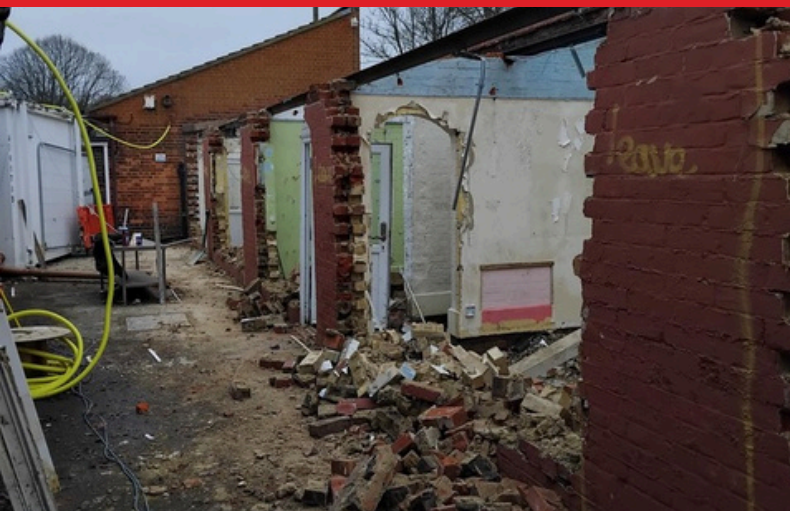
This term we have been pleased to continue our focus on Belonging for our school community by celebrating Children's Mental Health Awareness week.

We kickstarted the week with an assembly from Rachel, who is part of East Sussex's Me & My Mind team. She shared the importance of looking out for each other and how we can ensure all of our friends feel valued. Our Wellbeing Ambassadors have visited all classes again to share more top tips.



We have created a Whole School Art Project in which every child has tied a piece of ribbon to a wire replica of our logo. This is a visual representation of how every individual comes together to create our King Offa school community. In future, new joiners to our school can tie their ribbon on their first day. The current Year 6s ribbons will stay, symbolic of their lasting legacy and impact building the foundation for future pupils.

This week we have also considered how we can stay safe online, with age-appropriate activities to support children to consider safe choices when accessing technology and also teaching them more about the perks and pitfalls of AI. The children's work will be displayed in school.



## Major Building Regeneration Update

The Camelot building demolition is nearing completion and groundwork is underway. Thank you to families for your consideration during this process—whilst we aim to minimise disruption, we recognise that works can make it tricky at drop off and pick-up. Next term we move to the construction phase. In other projects we are exploring designs for the KS2 playground, and fundraising continues for Pirate ship replacement.



# Save the date – Upcoming events

## Friday 27nd February

Power to Drive Workshop – Year 6

## Monday 2nd to Friday 6th March

Bikeability – Year 3

## Thursday 5th March

Bedgebury Go Ape – Year 5

## Friday 6th March

World Book Day

## Monday 9th to Friday 13th March

British Science Week

## Monday 9th to Friday 20th March

Living Eggs Programme – Year R

## Monday 9th to Wednesday 11th March

PGL Residential – Year 6

## Thursday 12th March

Cross Country – Year 3 to 6

## Friday 13th March

INSET – Aurora Development Day and Hastings Music Festival – Musical Theatre Group

## Monday 16th March

Class Photos

## Tuesday 17th March

Sing Inspiration – Choir

## Wednesday 18th March

Drusilla's – Year 2

## Monday 23rd March

Rock Steady Spring Concert

## Monday 23rd to Friday 27th March

School Football Week

## Wednesday 25th March

Great Athletes

## Thursday 26th March

Hastings Music Festival – Year 5

## Friday 27th March

DOSE Day Colour Run



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