



THE
GILES NURSERY
AND
INFANTS'
SCHOOL



Headteacher: Mrs Rouane Mendel
Acting Assistant Head: Miss Lisa Hill

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School Aims: our school is a place where we aim to develop:

- ▶ Positive attitudes to learning
- ▶ Creativity and a sense of self-confidence and self-esteem
- ▶ Equality of opportunity, independence, individuality, tolerance, sensitivity and cooperation
- ▶ Good relations, respect for others and the environment
- ▶ A broad and balanced creative curriculum
- ▶ Pupil achievement by providing quality experiences

Dear Parents/Carers,

This week has been Big Write Week, led by our fabulous English curriculum leader and Acting Assistant Head, Miss Hill. The week began entrancingly when on Monday all classes in the school spent an hour in the company of a range of owls, observing them, learning about them and watching them fly. Some children, including Ernie from Red Fox class, were brave enough to wear the falconry gauntlet and let the owl fly and then land on their outstretched arms! The children were quite simply spellbound when viewing these extraordinary birds and the writing they have produced has been superb. Please see the year group sections below for more detail about the lovely activities engaged in throughout the school over the week, including clay models of owls and much more.

Thank you to all those parents who attended Stay and Read in Years Reception through to Year 2 this week, as well as the weekly Stay and Play in Nursery. Supporting your children in this way is so important.

Thank you also to all those who attended the Phonics Workshop held after school in all Reception classes. We were delighted with the turnout, and I hope very much that you enjoyed exploring the wide-ranging resources and ideas for supporting your child's phonics at home.

Nursery children have held Africa Week and have experienced a richly diverse range of activities. Please check out the website for photos!

Next week, the week of February 6th, we will be celebrating E-Safety week in school with Mrs Edwards leading a special E-Safety assembly. Lessons and activities will take place throughout E-Safety Week teaching the children skills that will help them to keep safe online. We hope you find the E-Safety Newsletter we sent you useful in supporting you to keep your children safe when they're on laptops or mobile phones at home. Children in our school are very aware of what it means to be safe online and display their understanding in conversation and in their work. We will continue to keep you informed as this is an area of crucial importance to children and adults alike in our modern world.

February Value of the Month is: Thoughtfulness. Being kind and thoughtful means making ourselves aware of the needs and feelings of others. We can be thoughtful towards our work, thinking carefully about how to do something to achieve success. Thoughtfulness is shown when we say, "Please" and "Thank you" or hold a door open for someone.

Arbor App: Thank you to all parents and carers who have downloaded and logged into the Arbor App. So far, 70% of you have logged in. If you haven't yet logged in and would like us to send out the school login to you, please do let the school office know.

Volunteer Positions Available: Thank you so much to parents who have approached me this week – it is hugely appreciated! If anyone would be interested in helping out in our Nursery from 11.30-12.30 please let me know as additional help at that time would be very helpful!

Please speak to me or email me on head@gilesinfants.herts.sch.uk if you are interested in doing some volunteer work in our lovely school. We value our volunteers so very much and you add immensely to the children's learning and enjoyment in school. Readers in particular would be very welcome.

Phone Number and Address: Please remember to update us if you change your phone number or move house. Please pop into the office or email us at admin@gilesinfants.herts.sch.uk to advise of the changes.

Ofsted Parent View: Many of you will be aware that Giles Junior has had Ofsted this week. Normally, ours takes place within a month or two of theirs. We would be so tremendously grateful if you could go online to say how you feel about our school. Last Ofsted we were judged as likely to be Outstanding when we were given a full Ofsted inspection. This was delayed because of Covid but our next one will be a full one.

The Ofsted Parent View page will only show if at least 10 people have responded. It does only take a few minutes and we would be so grateful if you could help. Just Google 'Ofsted Parent View' and you will get to it!

County has judged the school to be outstanding in every area for the past nine years. The county inspectors (otherwise known as HIPs, Hertfordshire Improvement Partners) visit two or three times every single year and they know the school through and through. Several of the inspectors have also been Ofsted inspectors, so one could say that this judgement is very secure. It would be so wonderful to get an outstanding grade at Ofsted when it comes. Last time we were inspected we were judged as likely to be outstanding but in order to be re-graded we had to have a 'long' inspection. Because of COVID this was delayed but we're expecting it this year.

Our teachers and our children work so hard, and they deserve it. Please go on to Ofsted Parent View and show your appreciation of the school. Community is very important and ours is so strong – Ofsted will look at this and your views matter! Just google 'Ofsted Parent View' and you can log in with your email account. Thank you so very much for being so supportive and such a tremendous community!

Notifying Us of Your Child's Absence: Please notify us by 9.15am if your child is going to be absent from school. You can notify us by either calling the school on 01438 359747 and selecting Option 1, or via email to admin@gilesinfants.herts.sch.uk.

Nursery School Places for September 2023: If you are a prospective parent, please make contact with the school office to arrange a visit. Application forms may be

downloaded from <https://www.gilesnurseryandinfants.co.uk/prospective-parent-tours/> or by request from the school office.

Please kindly share this message with parents, friends and family where they have a child due to start Nursery in September 2023. Applications opened on 1st November 2022, and places are offered on a first-come, first served basis.

Nursery: *This week, Ladybird Class had an absolutely fantastic time taking part in the visit from the owls and meeting Abbie the falconer. They learnt about different types of owls including little owls, skops owls, barn owls, tawny owls, and eagle owls. The children were fascinated to learn if an owl has yellow eyes, they are active in the day and sleep at night. If an owl has black eyes, they are active at night and sleep in the day, and if an owl has orange eyes, they are active at sunrise and sunset. They listened beautifully to Abbie as she shared facts about each of the wonderful owls. Joey came in the next day and said, "Mrs Morgan, can you take me to see the owls again?" Archie said, "I liked the big owl. I think it would fly so high!" Photographs of the visit can be found here: <https://www.gilesnurseryandinfants.co.uk/owl-visit/>*

This week, the children have learnt many interesting facts about Africa. They looked at a globe to see where Africa is situated and have been fascinated to learn all about the climate, the animals, and their habitat. Ibrahim brought a miniature globe in from home and shared, "It's a globe. I live here and this is Africa!"

In expressive art and design, the children looked at African rock art paintings and learnt that they were made by using natural materials found in the earth, such as clay. They then explored mixing red and green powder paint with glue to give their painting a rocky effect.

The children enjoyed listening to African drum music before playing a variety of different drums to several beats and rhythms. They showed fantastic hand eye coordination and timing. Cormac commented, 'I love drums. I can play it fast and then slow.' Jason said. 'It was fun! My favourite was the big drum!'

The children continued to explore different animals, such as snakes, tigers, lions, monkeys, and crocodiles in our jungle play area. Mauro remembered, "A baby rhino is a foal, and a baby zebra is a foal."

In phonics, the children have enjoyed playing the game Silly Soup using objects that start with the same sound, which is called alliteration. Everyone enjoyed joining in singing the Silly Soup song, "I'm making silly soup, I'm making soup that's silly, I'm going to put it in the fridge to make it nice and chilly! In goes..." The song is sung to Pop Goes the Weasel.

Next week, the children will take part in activities related to the book Dear Zoo by Rod Campbell. They will listen to the song Animal Boogie and bring home the song We're Going to the Zoo.

Reception: *This week, the children have thoroughly enjoyed Big Write. They began by comparing the illustration on the front cover of the book The Gingerbread Girl by Lisa Campbell Ernst to The Gingerbread Man. The children loved the story and predicted the Gingerbread Girl would end up being gobbled up by the fox, but they had a pleasant surprise! During one reading of The Gingerbread Girl story, Sara in Tawny Owl class said, "This story has a school and an artist and that is different to The Gingerbread Man!" The children applied their phonic knowledge to label parts of the Gingerbread Girl such as her liquorice hair and biscuit shoulders. They wrote a caption about the character and read their caption back to an adult.*

In mathematics, the children enjoyed using non-standard units of measurements to measure gingerbread men in baking trays. They used a starting point such as the gingerbread man's foot to help them measure accurately. The children estimated the length of the gingerbread man they had chosen and were so pleased when their estimation was correct. When Casey in Barn Owl class was measuring the length of a gingerbread man using buttons, he said, "I need to take one button away because they measured too long."

In understanding the world, the children used their five senses to investigate and explore the ingredients for making gingerbread men. Most of the children commented on how spicy the ginger was and were not too keen on tasting the bicarbonate of soda. The children did appear to enjoy sampling the golden syrup!

On Monday, a visitor came with owls to show the children and provide them with some interesting facts. They were treated to seeing a little owl, a barn owl, a tawny owl, a white-faced scops owl and a European eagle owl. The children found out that the colour of an owl's eyes indicates whether they are nocturnal, diurnal, or come out to hunt at sunrise and sunset.

The Musician of the Month for February is Tchaikovsky. When the children in Snowy Owl class were watching a clip from the ballet Sleeping Beauty, David said, "They do good dancing."

Next week in literacy, the children will be using their phonic skills to write a speech bubble for one of the characters from The Gingerbread Man story. In mathematics, the children will be focusing on recognising odd and even numbers and in expressive arts and design, the children will be manipulating clay to create a model of a gingerbread man.

Year 1: Wow! What a fantastic start to the week! The imaginations of the Year 1 children were set alight by the Big Write launch. On Monday, the children had an amazing experience, looking at the visiting owls. They were introduced to Dec, a little owl, Midge, a barn owl, Spud, a tawny owl, Akcieo, a scops owl and the grand finale was Bracken, a European eagle owl, the largest owl in the world! The children learnt about their diet and habitat and watched some of them fly.

Back in the classroom, the children set to work getting their hands messy by making bird nests. They made small thumb pots from clay that they lined with natural materials they foraged in the school woodland, such as leaves, sticks, or grass. They also added a few feathers to create a wonderful replica of a nest.

The children spent time planning a story opener in the style of our recent English text Bear and Wolf by Daniel Salmieri. They generated adjectives to describe the different owls and incorporated their ideas into their own story opener for their Big Write piece of work.

In phonics, the children have continued learning about alternative pronunciations. This week they learnt about 'u' sounding like 'yoo' or 'oo', such as 'unicorn' or 'put' and 'ow' sounding like 'ow' or 'oa', such as 'down' or 'snow'.

In mathematics, the children have continued to develop their knowledge of place value, looking at tens and ones. They have used a range of manipulatives to create teen numbers, demonstrating their understanding of swapping 10 ones for one 10.

In computing, the children enjoyed using the iPads to input the data collected from the Big Garden Bird Watch. They logged on to Purple Mash and made charts to show the results. Woodpigeons and blackbirds were very frequent visitors to gardens and parks in Stevenage last weekend.

In PE, the children continued their topic of team building. They enjoyed playing a variety of games with defenders and attackers. The children have also learnt how to pass a ball, using a bounce pass and chest pass.

*Next week, the children will begin their new topic of traditional tales. They will revisit old favourites such as *The Three Little Pigs* and *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* and begin making a puppet theatre in design technology. They will begin to look at the characteristics of traditional tales and repetitive phrases. Perhaps you could discuss at home what your favourite traditional tale is and why.*

Next week is also E-Safety week, with Safer Internet Day on Tuesday 7th February. The children will be deepening their understanding of the importance of keeping safe online through a variety of activities. Please do visit our website for lots of useful links and information.

Year 2: This week in English, the Year 2 children have been looking at different settings and thinking about a setting where our lovely owl visitors may like to visit. The children have applied their knowledge from last week and described the time of day and weather, while using their five senses to write descriptions about what the owl could see, smell, hear, taste and touch. They have thought of some brilliant adjectives to describe the different settings; for example, 'I can see the glistening stars in the dark, misty sky and feel the deep, dusty craters under my feet'. Some of the children have used similes in their writing and described the clouds 'as soft as cotton'. Next week, the children will begin to write poems about the rain. They will use adjectives to describe the look of the rain and verbs to describe its movement. They will also learn about onomatopoeia, which is when a word suggests the sound that it describes, such as 'whoosh' or 'crash'.

In mathematics this week, the children have been continuing their learning of bridging 10 and adding and subtracting across 10. They have used ten-frames to add and subtract within 20 and particularly enjoyed when the ten-frames were pretend chocolate bars. The children have also begun to use number lines to subtract within 20 by 'hopping' to the next number with Freddy the Frog. Next week, the children will begin to add and subtract two-digit numbers within 100, using number lines with the help of Freddy the Frog to find their 'number hops'.

In design technology, the children have worked hard to make a castle for the Snow Queen, using the techniques they have learnt. In art and design, the children were inspired by our owl visitors and have made personalised owls, using card to trace their hands to become the owl's wings, as well as practicing their fine motor skills to make bird feeders, which we put in our Forest School area.

In RE this week, the children have been learning about Buddhist temples and understanding the five elements of Buddhism. They designed their own Buddhist temples using different shapes to represent the five elements in their design.

On Tuesday next week, the children will celebrate Safer Internet Day. This year's theme is 'Want to talk about it? Making space for conversations about life online' and focuses on setting aside time to listen to children and young people and make positive change together online. The children will learn how to stay safe online through a range of activities, including thinking about who they would go to if anything worried them online, deciding what information should and shouldn't be shared online and creating a 'Magic Window' to make the internet a happier and kinder place.

This week's homework activity is to find facts about your favourite type of owl.

Have a great weekend, The Year 2 Team

STARS OF THE WEEK

Ladybird Nursery Classes	Misha	<i>for settling beautifully into Ladybird class.</i>
	Cormac	<i>for fantastic work finding rhyming pairs.</i>
	Mya-Jae	<i>for showing excellent behaviour at Nursery.</i>
	Mauro	<i>for excellent recall of animal facts.</i>
Snowy Owls	Aimee	<i>for applying her phonic knowledge to write a caption about the Gingerbread Girl.</i>
	Clark	<i>for measuring the length of a gingerbread man using the language 'longer' and 'shorter'.</i>
Tawny Owls	Reggie	<i>for amazing independent caption writing about the Gingerbread Girl.</i>
	Teddy	<i>for amazing balancing on the equipment in PE.</i>
	Sara	<i>for identifying lots of similarities and differences between the Gingerbread Man and Gingerbread Girl stories.</i>
Barn Owls	Casey	<i>for demonstrating fantastic gymnastic positions independently.</i>
	Xavi	<i>for marvellous segmenting and blending when labelling parts of the Gingerbread Girl.</i>
	Millie	<i>for settling in so beautifully into the Barn Owl class.</i>
Value of the month for determination	Snowy Owls: David and Alana Tawny Owls: Zenny, Zuzanna and Lennox Barn Owls: Betsy, Ava and Ellie	
Red Fox Class	Chiara	<i>for fabulous writing in English and the use of adjectives when writing about owls.</i>
	Madison	<i>for excellent progress in her reading.</i>
Big Cat Class	Maryam	<i>for excellent work in music, playing the glockenspiel in time to the beat.</i>
	Adriana	<i>for super place value maths work, showing 10 and some more.</i>
Walker Bear Class	Leon	<i>for beautiful handwriting when writing up your story opener.</i>
	Maya	<i>for participating well in a team game in PE.</i>
Value of the month for determination	Red Foxes: Maria and Ali Big Cats: Aleksander and Finley Walker Bears: Theo and Holly	
Penguin Class	Amelia	<i>for a wonderfully descriptive piece of writing.</i>
	Immy	<i>for making a super clay sculpture of an owl.</i>
Pelican Class	Lucas	<i>for good turn taking and co-operation in class this week.</i>
	Kayden	<i>for fantastic subtraction using a number line.</i>

Puffin Class	Ever Bela-Beatriz	<i>for making a wonderful owl using clay.</i> <i>for writing a fantastic description about a setting.</i>
Value of the month for determination	Penguins: Aaron and Riley Pelicans: Miller, Meadow and Teddy Puffins: Amaan, Scarlet and Asfiya	

kindest regards,
 Rouane Mendel, Headteacher



School Dates

FEBRUARY 2023	
w/c Monday 6 th	E-SAFETY WEEK
Tuesday 7 th	Safer Internet Day with assembly and training for pupils
Wednesday 8 th	FROG / PTA Bake Sale, 3.15pm . Donations welcome!
Monday 20 th	Children return to school
Tuesday 21 st	Shrove Tuesday Assembly in school, pupils only
Tuesday 21 st	Year 1 Phonics Workshop, 3.30-4.15pm
Wednesday 22 nd	SEN/Inclusion team Drop-In, 8.50-9.30am . If you have something you would like to discuss with our specialist team, do drop by for coffee.
w/c Monday 27 th	BOOK WEEK

MARCH 2023	
Thursday 2 nd	World Book Day - non-uniform day, children dress as their favourite character, donations for charity
Wednesday 8 th	Holi Assembly, Hindu Festival of Colours, pupils only
Thursday 9 th	Nursery Open Evening, 4.30-5.30pm for children due to start September 2023
Friday 17 th	Red Nose Day
Monday 20 th	SEN/Inclusion team Drop-In, 8.50-9.30am . If you have something you would like to discuss with our specialist team, do drop by for coffee.
Wednesday 22 nd	Stay and Read, Years 1 and 2, 2.45-3.15pm . Parents come into class to read with their child or small group of children. All very welcome.
Thursday 23 rd	Assessment and SATs presentation for Year 2 parents, 3.30-4.30pm
w/c Monday 27 th	Easter activities throughout school
Monday 27 th	Easter assembly in school, pupils only
Week of 27 th	Parent Consultations
Week of 27 th	SCIENCE WEEK
Tuesday 28 th	Year 2 – Native American Dance workshop
TBC	FROG / PTA Easter Stay and Play, 3.30-4.30pm
Friday 31 st	Easter Bonnet Parade, whole school, pupils only
Friday 31 st	Last day of term – finish at 2pm

TERM DATES 2022-23

Spring Term: Thursday 5th January 2023 – Friday 31st March 2023

[Half Term: Monday 13th February 2023 – Friday 17th February 2023]

Children return to school on Monday 20th February 2023

[Easter Holidays: Monday 3rd April 2023 – Friday 14th April 2023]

Children return to school on Monday 17th April 2023

Summer Term: Monday 17th April 2023 – 21st July 2023

[Half Term: Monday 29th May 2023 – Friday 2nd June 2023]

Children return to school on Tuesday 6th June 2023

School finishes on Friday 21st July at 2.00pm

INSET DAYS 2022-23

Thursday 1st September 2022 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Monday 31st October 2022 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Friday 9th December 2022 OCCASIONAL Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Wednesday 21st December 2022 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Monday 5th June 2023 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Monday 3rd July 2023 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Term Dates 2023-24

Autumn Term: Friday 1st September 2023 – 20th December 2023

Friday 1st September 2023 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Monday 4th September 2023 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Children return to school on Tuesday 5th September 2023

[Half Term: Monday 23rd October 2023 – Friday 27th October 2023]

Monday 30th October 2023 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Children return to school on Tuesday 31st October 2023

Friday 24th November 2023 OCCASIONAL Day SCHOOL CLOSED

School finishes on Wednesday 20th December at 2pm

[Christmas Holidays: Thursday 21st December – Wednesday 3rd January 2024]

Monday 25th December 2023 Bank Holiday SCHOOL CLOSED

Tuesday 26th December 2023 Bank Holiday SCHOOL CLOSED

Children return to school on Thursday 4th January 2024

Spring Term: Thursday 4th January 2024 – Thursday 28th March 2024

Monday 1st January 2024 Bank Holiday SCHOOL CLOSED

[Half term: Monday 19th February 2024 – Friday 23rd February 2024]

Children return to school on Monday 26th February 2024

School finishes on Thursday 28th March at 2pm

Friday 29th March 2024 Bank Holiday SCHOOL CLOSED

Monday 1st April 2024 Bank Holiday SCHOOL CLOSED

[Easter Holidays: Friday 29th March – Friday 12th April 2024]

Children return to school on Monday 15th April 2024

Summer Term: Monday 15th April 2024 – Tuesday 23rd July 2024

Monday 6th May 2024 Bank Holiday SCHOOL CLOSED

Monday 27th May 2024 Bank Holiday SCHOOL CLOSED

[Half term: Monday 27th May 2024 – Friday 31st May 2024]

Monday 3rd June 2024 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Children return to school on Tuesday 4th June 2024

Monday 1st July 2024 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

School finishes on Tuesday 23rd July at 2.00pm