



THE
GILES NURSERY
AND
INFANTS'
SCHOOL



Headteacher: Mrs Rouane Mendel
Assistant Heads: Miss Lisa Hill and Mrs Tania Dalton

Durham Road, Stevenage, Herts. SG1 4JQ
Telephone: 01438 359747
Email: admin@gilesinfants.herts.sch.uk
Website: www.gilesnurseryandinfants.co.uk

6.12.2024

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,

We hope you all enjoyed the long weekend last week. In school, children have had the most wonderful week – all staff worked so hard before the Occasional Day to transform their classrooms and the school hall into magical, Christmassy spaces! When the children came in on Monday morning, everything was ready. Christmas trees, tinsel, Nativities, seasonal role play areas and Advent calendars were everywhere and the whole school looked absolutely glorious.

It is one of the loveliest times of the school year and our children have enjoyed a fabulous, sparkling week. The Reception Christmas Concerts brought tears to many an eye. This was the first performance in front of an audience for at least a year for our Reception children and families expressed such delight in the concerts! Many parents spoke to me about what a lovely school this is and how well their children are doing and how happy they are. The children were all able to recite the story of 'The Three Little Pigs' using their words so clearly. The artwork was simply fantastic, the singing so joyous. We are so very, very proud of our Reception children. Thank you to Mrs Dacombe, Mrs Clark and Miss Busby and all our amazing support staff for putting on such marvellous performances.

Next week is going to be even busier! Please see below timings for Nursery and Year 2 Christmas concerts and for Year 1's Nativity in church.

We have received the report from our recent County inspection which focused on art and design. I'm delighted to be able to inform you that we were graded Outstanding.

Some of the report content follows:

- ***Art and design permeates throughout the school. Displays showcase and celebrate pupils' artwork in its broadest sense. The school serves a diverse community, and art is used to celebrate diversity and promote inclusivity. Curriculum documentation, available on the website, offers a wide range of artistic experiences, from drawing and painting to digital art and is enriched by links to other subjects such as history and literacy.***
- ***The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure progression in skills, knowledge and understanding. It is enriched by unique opportunities.***

- *Teacher modelling and explanation was exemplary. During lessons, teachers effectively demonstrated techniques, processes and creative thinking.*
- *Through expert modelling, teachers ensured that all pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEND), could access the lesson. The impact of teacher-modelling was evident in pupils' confidence and enthusiasm for art.*
- *Teachers created an atmosphere of trust and encouragement, where pupils felt safe to experiment and take creative risks. Consequently, pupils were happy to share their work and congratulated others on their achievements.*
- *Pupils spoken to, as part of lesson visits, used vocabulary confidently and accurately.*
- *Pupil engagement and levels of perseverance were exemplary. In Nursery, pupils selected from a range of tools, such as forks, sponges and film cannisters, to recreate textures observed related to bears' fur.*

Mrs Dacombe, Mrs Collinson and Miss Wright all delivered inspirational lessons with pupils profoundly engaged. Our partner, Mrs Hintridge, said of our Nursery that the standard of provision was exceptionally high, especially in terms of the breadth of activities, richness of provision, beauty of the environment, including eye-wateringly beautiful displays and role play areas which honour the children's work and develop their learning, and in terms of the quality of adult interactions with the children. Our children did us proud in every single area of the school.

Mrs Humphrey, our lead for art and design, was brilliant - she knows her subject so well, has led with real creativity and introduced so many new ideas that the children are loving. We are so lucky to have such a fantastic leader!

We are so proud of our staff and of our amazing children. I will put the full report on the website so you are able to read it in its entirety should you so wish.

Year 1 Nativity in Church: *This all-important Christmas event takes place next week on Tuesday! Children may come dressed as angels, or shepherds if they wish and we will leave school at 9.30am to be in church for a 10.00am start on Tuesday 10th December. Thank you for walking with us and accompanying your child if possible.*

Year 2 Christmas Concerts: *Wednesday 11th December 9.30am and 6pm. Unfortunately, space only permits each child to be watched by two adults. You may either select for two adults to watch one performance or for one adult to attend each performance.*

We're so sorry that spaces are so few and have decided to do an additional rendition of the songs only on another day. This will take place at 2.15pm on Tuesday 17th December. As it will be a shorter performance of the songs only, it will be standing room only therefore we will have space for family members who were not able to attend the actual performances to come if they wish. Weather (and soundtrack arrangements) permitting, this might take place in the school playground. Otherwise, it will take place in the school hall.

Nursery Christmas Concerts: *These unmissable concerts take place next Thursday 12th December at 10.00am and 2pm. Families have received individual letters indicating their child's performance.*

Rocksteady Concert: *Parents and carers of Rocksteady pupils are invited to a concert to take place on Wednesday 18th December at 9.30am in the school hall.*

Christmas Dinner: *On Wednesday 18th December, the children will be having a Christmas dinner. Our fantastic FROG kindly decorate the entire hall so that it is Christmassy and sparkling! Our cook is aware of those children with dietary allergies and will prepare special puddings for those children.*



After School Club: We would like to remind you that at the end of each term when school finishes at 1pm, there is no After School Club so please remember that it will not be open on Friday 20th December.

Reception and Nursery Tours: We are offering tours of Reception and Nursery approximately every other Tuesday. On Tuesday 10th December, both Nursery and Reception will run tours from 3.45-4.30pm. If you have a child entering these classes next September (or know anyone else who does!), please visit [The Giles Nursery and Infants' School - Prospective Parent Tours](#) to book a place or call or visit the school office.

Children due to start Reception in September 2025: The application process for Reception year to start in September 2025 opened on 1st November 2024 and will close on 15th January 2025. Applications can be made via [Primary, junior and middle school places / Hertfordshire County Council](#).

Children due to start Nursery in September 2025: Applications/admissions are managed by the school. Applications opened on 1st November 2024. An application form is available on the school website.

Applications for school places for Year 3 upwards: Year 2 Parents/Carers - please be reminded that you will need to apply for your child's Year 3 place for September 2025. The deadline for this is 15th January 2025 and applications are made on-line - please follow the link below: [Primary, junior and middle school places / Hertfordshire County Council](#)

FROG Christmas Event – Tuesday 17th December: Come and join us from 3.15pm in the main school hall for some exciting Christmas activities organised by our FROG team. Thank you so much for your tombola donations given in support of our Crazy Hair Day today!



Staff vacancies: We are currently advertising for a school caretaker. If you would be interested in applying, please follow this link for the job description and application form: [Vacancies](#)

Volunteer work in school: We appreciate our volunteers so greatly and it is a role that in turn can give those who volunteer in school a lot of happiness. Our children are so fantastic and the teaching staff so incredible – it's an opportunity to make new friends and to pick up new skills at the same time as supporting our children's learning. Please speak to me if you are interested in doing some volunteer work in our school. Some volunteers also go on to do apprenticeships with us so if you are interested in this, do please speak to me.

Spare clothing for Reception classes: Reception is in desperate need of spare clothing as they are running extremely low. In particular, they need girls' underwear, girls' tights, and socks and trousers for both boys and girls. If your child has grown out of any of these, the Reception staff will happily accept any donations.

Nursery: It has been a wonderful week in Nursery as we begin Advent celebrations. The children enjoyed a range of activities linked to the Nativity story. Caleb was particularly excited to create a woolly sheep and commented, "It goes in the stable." They were all thoroughly engaged learning new songs in preparation for the Christmas concert. In expressive art and design, the children were excited to create a Santa face, carefully painting a paper plate, adding wool for a beard and a special hat.

In phonics, the children enjoyed playing the game 'noisy neighbour'. The story starts "Early one morning, the children were all fast asleep... when all of a sudden they heard

a sound from the house next door.” They listened carefully to the sound and worked hard to identify what might make the sound.

In PSHCE, the children thought about being a kind friend and how they could be a good friend. Everyone thought that to be a good friend you need to listen to others, be kind, share and take turns.

In mathematics, the children learnt all about the number five. During a game of ‘fastest fingers’ everyone was quick to show one hand is five. This week’s number rhyme was ‘Draw the back and the belly, then the hat. It’s a five! Watch out, it might come alive!’

The children have been excited to practise singing songs ready for the concert on Thursday 12th December. Please send your child to Nursery at their normal time, wearing a Christmas jumper or outfit if you wish. We will open the gate for parents and carers just before the concert, which will take place in the Nursery.

Next week, the children will continue to enjoy festive arts and crafts. Please can all library books be returned on Monday 9th December; we will start the library again after the Christmas break.

Reception: This week, the children performed their class assemblies and all the staff in Reception were so proud of the children. It was lovely to see so many people in the audience and the children loved seeing the grown ups join in with singing, ‘We Wish you a Merry Christmas’. When Archer in Tawny Owl class was being the Big Bad Wolf in the class assembly, instead of saying, “No, I’m not, I’m furious!”, he said, “No, I’m not, I’m curious!”

In understanding the world, the children loved investigating the force of the Big Bad Wolf’s huffing and puffing on building materials. They used a hairdryer for the wolf’s huffs and puffs to blow down a straw house, a stick house and a brick house. Before beginning his investigation, Teddie in Barn Owl class predicted, “The hairdryer wolf won’t blow the brick house down as the brick house is too strong.” When evaluating her investigation, Calliope in Snowy Owl class said, “The brick house has cement, therefore it is too strong!”



In mathematics, the children investigated four-sided shapes combining assorted sizes of squares and rectangles. They discovered if they placed two rectangles together it could make a larger rectangle or a square.

Our poem of the week is 'Advent Song'. Please encourage your child to read the poem to you, a member of the family or a family friend. These weekly poems are to aid your child's fluency in reading. The children do enjoy reading the poems each week.

*Advent is a time to wait,
Not quite time to celebrate,
Count the candles one by one,
Until Advent time is done.
Day by day we work and play,
To prepare for Christmas day!*

This poem can be sung to the tune of 'Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.'

Next week in literacy, the children will be focusing on the Nativity using characters to retell the story through pictures and in RE the children will look at why Christians around the world celebrate Christmas. Throughout the week, the children will be listening to a variety of Christmas-themed stories and participating in many Christmas activities.

In mathematics, the children will be focusing on the language of position. They will be playing the game, 'Where's my teddy?' and placing the teddy in various positions; for example, between two books, under a table or on top of a bowl.

Year 1: This week in English, the children have learnt about capital letters. They have matched capital letters to their lower-case counterpart, identified capital letters in a written text, and corrected the missing capital letters at the start of sentences in a short text. In phonics, the children began to learn all about split vowel digraphs, for example 'i-e' in 'dice'. They practised putting the smiley sound button on words with a split vowel and learnt that the split digraphs are at the end of words. They learnt to look for the 'friend on the end' to know if they are reading a split vowel digraph. The children started their new unit of learning in mathematics this week, all about 2D and 3D shapes.

In art and design, the children completed their final piece – a colour field painting in the style of the artist Mark Rothko. They learnt that his colour field paintings are large so that the viewer feels immersed in the colours. They also learnt that it is an abstract form of painting, so it conveys an idea or an emotion rather than an object. The children thought about what ideas or feelings they wanted to paint and then mixed their colours using only the primary colours on their palettes. The results are beautiful. In history the children sorted toys from the past and toys today, and in computing they have learnt about algorithms and that precise instructions are essential for a computer to follow.

The children have been rehearsing for our Christmas at Church event on Tuesday. Thank you for returning your permission slips and for indicating if you will walk with your child. Song words went home with the children last week. Please do help your child to practise the songs at home. On Tuesday, the children should come to school in school uniform, but they may wear a shepherd or angel costume over the top of their school clothes. If you are walking with your child, please bring your child to the classroom at normal school time (8.45am), and then please wait on the playground whilst we record the register and dinner choices.

Next week, the children will continue to learn about 2D and 3D shape in mathematics. In English, they will be learning how to perform a poem. In RE, the children will learn about the Jewish festival of light known as Hannukah and in science, they will learn how to classify animals as fish. We would like the children to make their own chronology in history. For this, it would be helpful if you could please send in a photo of your child as a baby with a baby toy, and a photo of them now with a toy they enjoy. Please only send in a copy, not the original photo, as we stick them into the children's topic books.

The children have a new homework sheet all about shapes. Please return the books to school by Wednesday 18th December.

We hope you have a lovely weekend.

Year 2: It has been a lovely week in Year 2. The children returned to school on Monday to find Christmas decorations in their classrooms and throughout the school, along with some cheeky elves! Advent calendars are being opened, and the children spent time learning about the traditions of Advent and what it means to people who share the Christian faith. Some children made Advent wreaths to remind them of the Christian tradition.

On Tuesday, the children attended a special assembly led by Hertfordshire libraries. They found out about Winter Reads, an exciting reading challenge taking place across Hertfordshire libraries until the end of January. Children need to pick up a Winter Reads challenge card from the local library, complete and record challenges and return to the local library to get a stamp. Once they've completed six challenges, they'll be entered into a prize draw to win an iPad, plus other fantastic runners-up prizes. As well as being a great way to explore new books and old favourites, Winter Reads is a brilliant opportunity to read together as a family or with friends. Please do consider taking part and let us know how you get on.

In English this week, the children have been very busy rehearsing for the Year 2 Christmas performances. There is a lot to remember, including lines, songs, dances and movement on the stage. They are working very hard and can't wait to share the performance with you. If you haven't already done so, please make sure you have booked your tickets via the links below:

Morning performance: [Tickets for morning performance](#)

Evening performance: [Tickets for evening performance](#)

Please check your child's book bag for their costume letter. We will provide the majority of the costumes but would appreciate it if you can send your child in with a Christmas jumper, if they are a narrator. Thank you.

In mathematics, the children continued to learn about subtraction. They practiced subtracting on the number line, using their knowledge of the bonds to ten and regrouping tens to help them solve subtraction problems.

In geography this week, the children compared the features of Stevenage with the features of the Isle of Coll. They used Google Earth to compare aerial views and thought about how their lives are different to the lives of children on Coll. They were amazed to discover that the primary school on Coll has only three pupils in the entire school! In art and design, the children applied their learning about pointillism to paint a picture of a castle. In history, the children learnt about heraldry and how knights used banners and emblems to let others know who they were when they were wearing full suits of armour.

Next week, the children will put the finishing touches to their Christmas play before the two performances on Wednesday. In mathematics, they will learn how to work out ten more and ten less, before they practise adding and subtracting tens. In design and technology, the children will design a castle, which they will then make using card. In geography, they will learn the difference between physical and human features and in history, they will design their own coat of arms.

We hope you have a lovely weekend.

CLASS ATTENDANCE TROPHY

TROPHY-BEARING CLASS WITH THE BEST ATTENDANCE FOR THIS WEEK

PENGUIN CLASS

97.6%

FANTASTIC ATTENDANCE – WELL DONE!!



STARS OF THE WEEK

Ladybird Nursery Classes	<p><i>Tito for fantastic singing and understanding of number when counting down from five.</i></p> <p><i>Jaxon for joining in with singing and actions.</i></p> <p><i>Florence for creating a brilliant Santa face plate.</i></p> <p><i>Andrew for super effort when singing with actions.</i></p> <p><i>Zachary for fantastic effort when singing with actions.</i></p>
Snowy Owls	<i>All the children in Snowy Owl class for performing a brilliant class assembly.</i>
Tawny Owls	<i>All the children in Tawny Owl class for performing a wonderful class assembly.</i>
Barn Owls	<i>All the children in Barn Owl class for performing a fantastic class assembly.</i>
Red Foxes	<p><i>Cormac for excellent knowledge of amphibians.</i></p> <p><i>Muna for super independent writing.</i></p>
Big Cats	<p><i>Muna for having a super understanding of 3D shapes.</i></p> <p><i>Afna for always trying her best with all her learning.</i></p>
Walker Bears	<p><i>Leo for fabulous phonics identifying split vowel digraphs.</i></p> <p><i>Oliver for fantastic addition and subtraction problem-solving.</i></p>
Pelicans	<p><i>Noah for being a supportive learning partner.</i></p> <p><i>Zac for excellent listening at all times.</i></p>
Puffins	<p><i>Theo for designing an excellent final piece in art using pointillism.</i></p> <p><i>Parth for always demonstrating excellent learning behaviours.</i></p>

<i>Penguins</i>	<i>Odin for an excellent attitude to learning.</i> <i>Alexander for showing a mature perspective in PSHCE.</i>
-----------------	---

I hope you all have a wonderful weekend.

Kindest regards,

Rouane Mendel
Headteacher

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SCHOOL DATES AND EVENTS AUTUMN TERM 2024-25

Tuesday 10th December – Year 1 Nativity in Church

3.45-4.30 Tuesday 10th December Reception/Nursery Tour for parents applying for a September 2025 place

9.30 Wednesday 11th December Year 2 Christmas Concert

6.00 Wednesday 11th December Year 2 Christmas Concert

10.00 Thursday 12th December Nursery Christmas Concert – by invitation

2.00 Thursday 12th December Nursery Christmas Concert – by invitation

1.00 Tuesday 17th December Orca class invites parents in for Christmas celebration

2.15 Tuesday 17th December Year 2 Christmas Concert songs performance

3.15-4.30 Tuesday 17th December FROG Christmas Event

9.30 Wednesday 18th December Rocksteady concert – parents / carers of children taking part in Rocksteady band lessons only.

Wednesday 18th December – Christmas Dinner

Thursday 19th December – Christmas Parties with possible surprise visitor

Friday 20th December – END OF TERM
SCHOOL CLOSSES 1.00 PM

TERM DATES 2024-25

Autumn Term: Monday 2nd September 2024 – 20th December 2024

School finishes on Friday 20th December 2024 at 1.00pm

[Christmas Holidays: Monday 23rd December 2024 – Friday 3rd January 2025]

Children return to school on Monday 6th January 2025

Spring Term: Monday 6th January 2025 – Friday 4th April 2025

[Half term: Monday 17th February 2025 – Friday 21st February 2025]

Children return to school on Monday 24th February 2025

School finishes on Friday 4th April 2025 at 1.00pm

[Easter Holidays: Monday 7th April 2025 – Monday 21st April 2025]

Children return to school on Tuesday 22nd April 2025

Summer Term: Tuesday 22nd April 2025 – Wednesday 23rd July 2025

Monday 5th May 2025 Bank Holiday SCHOOL CLOSED

Monday 26th May 2025 Bank Holiday SCHOOL CLOSED

[Half term: Monday 26th May 2025 – Friday 30th May 2025]

Monday 2nd June 2025 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Children return to school on Tuesday 3rd June 2025

Monday 30th June 2025 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

School finishes on Wednesday 23rd July 2025 at 1.00pm



2024 / 25 School Calendar

September '24						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

October '24						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

November '24						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

December '24						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

January '25						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

February '25						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

March '25						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						







April '25						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

May '25						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

June '25						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

July '25						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

August '25						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

-  = Term Time
-  = 23/24 Pupil Holidays
-  = Bank and Public Holidays
-  = 2024/25 Pupil Holidays
-  = Inset Day - school closed to pupils
-  = Occasional Day - (school closed to pupils)

