



THE
GILES NURSERY
AND
INFANTS'
SCHOOL



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

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10.01.2025

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,

I would like to wish you all a very, very Happy New Year. I hope that 2025 brings each and every one of you health and happiness.

The children have had a really lovely first week back in school; they have all returned so happily and have settled back into school so calmly. Our Year 2 school councillors were asked by a student teacher this week to describe our school in a few words: Jamal thinks it is 'kind' and 'fantastic'; Parth said, 'nice' and 'amazing'; Bella feels it is 'fun'.

Thank you for the kind, generous presents: All the staff and I would like to thank you all for your kindness and generosity. Not many schools are blessed with such kind-hearted parents. Thank you so much. Your thoughtfulness is hugely appreciated.

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

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 **this coming Wednesday, 15th January 2025** and applications are made on-line - please follow the link below: [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.

Meet your child's Nursery Key Worker: We are organising times when you will be able to come to school in small groups to meet the team. We would like to invite the families from Rectangle and Circle Groups (key workers Mrs Morgan and Mrs Aldridge) to come in to see us next Wednesday 15th January from 3.30pm - 3.50pm.

Change of Address or Contact Information: *If you have moved house or changed your contact information over the Christmas break, please could we ask you to let us know so that we can keep your child's record up to date.*

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 either by calling the school on 01438 359747 and selecting Option 1, or via an email to admin@gilesinfants.herts.sch.uk.*

Parking on school grounds: *Thank you everyone for being aware of the fact that our car park is absolutely tiny. Access to the school car park is only given to permit holders and only permit holders may park in the school car park.*

The Junior School has asked us to look into putting in an electric gate because they feel that the car park is no longer safe. Children's safety must come first but if everyone obeys the rules and does not enter the car park, then we will not need to go to the expense of a gate.

Severe Weather/Public Emergency: *If the school has to close due to severe weather/public emergency, we shall send you an email and/or text message to advise whether the school remains open. We shall also update the school website with important information on the main page www.gilesnurseryandinfants.co.uk.*

Year 1 Phonics Screening Check Date 2025: *This will take place the week of 9th-13th June. Please can holidays be strictly avoided at this time. Thank you.*

Message from Herts County Council: *Hertfordshire's Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMHS) system wants to understand what parents and carers need when they are faced with supporting their child or young person's poor emotional wellbeing.*

It can be difficult to understand why they might be experiencing low moods, anxiety or self-harming behaviours, how to cope as a family, or knowing the strategies that could help at home. In preparation for commissioning a new service, we want to make sure parents and carers feel supported, have professionals and peers to speak to and share experiences with, all while knowing they are far from alone. The survey will be open until Sunday 26 January 2025. [Complete the survey here.](#)

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 and Year 1 classes: *Reception and Year 1 are in desperate need of spare clothing as they are running extremely low. In particular, they need girls' and boys' underwear, girls' tights, and socks and trousers for both boys and girls. If your child has grown out of any of these, the Reception and Year 1 staff will happily accept any donations. Thank you.*

KS1 Big Write: *This term's Big Write will take place the week beginning Monday 20th January for Year 1 and 2. The theme will be magic potions. We have planned lots of exciting activities for the week, including a wonderful interactive workshop. To celebrate the Big Write week, we are inviting children to dress up in magic themed costumes on Friday 24th January. They might dress up as a witch, a wizard, a princess, a magician, or something wonderful from your imagination! Please speak to your child's class teacher if you need any suggestions.*

Census Day Thursday 16th January - School Dinner Menu change: Thursday 16th January is Census Day so we will swap Thursday and Friday dinners that week. This means that on Thursday 16th January, children will be offered:

Red Option: salmon and sweet potato fishcake

Green Option: cheese and tomato pizza

White Option: jacket potato

Yellow Option: egg roll

Side order: oven chips or tricolour pasta

On Friday 19th January, children will be offered:

Red Option: beef burger in a bun

Green Option: tomato bolognese

White Option: jacket potato

Yellow Option: tuna roll

Side order: potato wedges or spaghetti

Please do encourage your child to try a school dinner - it potentially means more money for the school if numbers are high. Your child can always bring in their own packed lunch but also have a school dinner 'on the side' that day! Thank you for your support.

Nursery: It has been a wonderful week in Ladybird Class and the children have settled back beautifully. They enjoyed being back with their friends and told us all about the wonderful time they had during the holidays.

This week, the children have been thinking about changes during the winter season and learnt a song about winter. Whilst playing outside, Lucas commented, 'Look at my air. Can see it.' They had the opportunity to explore ice and enjoyed holding it in their hands, chipping and stroking it with brushes and watching the ice change to water as it melted. Rose explored the ice and said, 'It's cold.' Amelia used her hands to hold the ice and shared, 'Ice makes my fingers cold.'



In Understanding of the World, the children learnt about hibernation. They remembered hibernation is when some animals have a deep sleep during cold weather. To get ready to hibernate, those animals eat lots of food during autumn and then find a safe and warm place to sleep. The children found out that brown bears, hedgehogs, bats and dormice hibernate.



The children learnt about cold colours in expressive art and design, before making beautiful winter collages, polar bear pictures, winter trees or snowflakes. They were excited to make marks using brushes in flour to represent snow and beautiful snowy chalk pictures. They loved using wintry-themed playdough.

In phonics, the children have been introduced to rhyming words. Rhyming words are words that have the same end sound. Each week we will learn two rhyming words and make a rhyming string. This week our rhyming words were 'cat' and 'bat'.

Our topic this term is animals and next week we will be reading 'Walking through the Jungle' by Julie Lacombe. The children will learn about jungle animals, explore the jungle-themed role play and make an animal painting. In phonics, they will consolidate their learning about syllables and begin to tap out the syllables in words; for example, 'croc-o-dile' and 'e-le-phant'. Next week, our rhyming string will start with 'dog' and 'frog'.

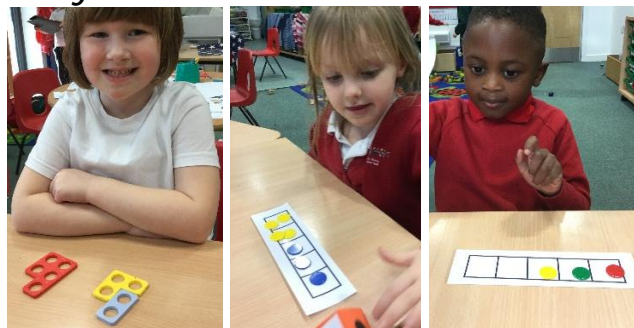
Next week, we will have Stay and Play on Thursday from 8.30am-9.20am. If you can, please come and join your child to share a book or other activity.

Reception: *The children's new topic this term is the traditional tale of 'The Gingerbread Man'. First, they had to be 'story detectives' and identify the new topic story from objects drawn out of a bag of clues. Suggestions of stories from the children included 'A Squash and a Squeeze' by Julia Donaldson and the traditional song 'Old MacDonald had a farm'. The children listened to a version of the story and were introduced to Makaton signs to support them retelling the story in their own words. The children created some wonderful story maps. Whilst retelling her version of the story of 'The Gingerbread Man', Kiara in Barn Owl class said, 'A little old man and a little old woman baked a gingerbread man who jumped out of the oven. The gingerbread man said, "Run, run as fast as you can, you can't catch me, I'm the gingerbread man."*

This week's poem is 'Snowflakes', poet unknown.

*Snowflakes, snowflakes
Falling to the ground.
Each one rests so gently
They never make a sound.
Snowflakes, snowflakes
Are so pure and white.
The special thing about them is
No two are alike.*

In mathematics, the children participated in activities focusing on five. They loved playing the witch's cauldron game, throwing the ingredients into the pot to create calculations totalling five. The children enjoyed playing a game where they had to give away five cubes by rolling a dice numbered 0 to 3.



Next week at snack time, the children will be generating 'wow' words (adjectives) to describe the snack they are eating. These 'wow' words will begin to support the children in broadening their vocabulary.

In literacy, the children will be listening to different versions of 'The Gingerbread Man' throughout the week and discussing the similarities and differences. They will be writing sentences about one of the characters and including a 'wow' word in each of their sentences.

The children will be focusing on subitising to five in mathematics. Subitising means recognising an amount without counting.

In understanding the world, the children will be looking at seasonal changes and using charcoal to draw a tree in winter. They will be using their senses to investigate ginger and planting some ginger in pots. In RE, the children will be looking at weddings, listening to the story 'A Wedding Day Wish for Puddles' and discussing why people get married. The children will be talking about ways they persevered when faced with a challenge in their PSED learning. The Musician of the Month for January is ABBA. The children will be displaying their dance moves whilst listening to different songs by

this famous group. This week, the children have enjoyed dancing to 'Waterloo', the song that won ABBA the Eurovision Song Contest in 1974. They will also be listening to 'Mamma Mia' and 'Money, Money, Money'.

***Year 1:** The children have had a wonderful start to the new term. We have been very impressed by how settled and ready for learning they now are. They have enjoyed telling us news from their holidays.*

This week in English, the children used role play to imagine they were on a winter walk. They wrapped up warm and thought of exciting wintry adjectives. The children listened to their new English book, 'Bear and Wolf' by Daniel Salmieri. They looked carefully at the first picture from the book and discussed what they noticed and wondered about the illustration. The children also imagined being the main characters in the story and wrote speech bubbles for them. In phonics, the children have begun to learn alternative pronunciations. This week, the children learnt about long and short sounds made by the vowels 'i' and 'o' in 'find', 'fish', 'hot' and 'go'. Throughout this term in handwriting, the children will be practising letters of the Curly Caterpillar letter family. These include, c, a, o, d, e, g, q, s and f. All these letters have in common that they start with an anti-clockwise curve.



In mathematics, the children began their new unit of learning all about place value with numbers up to 20. They have been building numbers from eleven to 19 using base 10, ten frames, bead strings and rekenreks, noticing the structure of '1 lot of ten and some ones'. They learnt that when they write the number, they write the 1 for the '1 lot of ten' first. The children have practised counting forwards and backwards within 20, starting on any number. In computing, the children began their new topic on grouping and sorting. They thought of a range of criteria and sorted a selection of shapes accordingly.

The children learnt to identify the key features of birds in science. This term we have a special focus on birds during which the children will learn to identify some common British birds, including robin, magpie, blackbird, sparrow, crow and swan. They are encouraged to take part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch with you at home and they make bird feeders and hides in outdoor learning. In art, the children began to learn about cool colours. They identified cool blues, purples and greys in a picture and looked closely at the painting 'Central Park, Winter' by William Glackens.

Next week the children will continue to explore the story of 'Bear and Wolf'. They will describe a character from the book using adjectives and will be encouraged to extend their sentences by using 'and'. In mathematics, the children will continue to explore the value of numbers up to 20. In science, the children will learn about animal diets and the key words 'omnivore', 'herbivore' and 'carnivore'.

Outdoor learning restarts next week, on Monday 13th January for Walker Bears and on Thursday 16th January for Big Cats and Red Foxes. Please make sure your child has very warm clothing on those days! In outdoor learning the week after next, we would like to make binoculars. We would be very grateful to receive in advance any cardboard tubes you could send into school with your child, please. Thank you for helping us with this.

New homework will be coming home today. Please return homework books to school by Wednesday 22nd January. We wish you a wonderful weekend.

The Year One Team

Year 2: We hope you had a wonderful Christmas and wish you a very happy New Year! Thank you again for the lovely cards and gifts. We really do appreciate your kind generosity.



It has been a fantastic first week of term in Year 2. The children have returned well-rested, ready to begin new topics and continue making excellent progress in their learning. This week, they spent time getting back into routines and settling into the new term. Bella in Penguin Class really enjoyed drawing new year fireworks. She said, 'My favourite art was drawing fireworks with new pastel pens'. They started their new topic, 'A Land Far, Far Away', which focuses on Antarctica this half term.

In English, the children enjoyed listening to an abridged version of the C. S. Lewis classic, 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe', which is the key text for our unit of work about story settings. The unit focuses on creating and describing a setting for a story. This week, the children sorted pictures for an icy landscape setting, and they learnt some exciting new vocabulary to describe different types of cold weather.

In mathematics, the children worked hard to finish the unit of work learning about addition and subtraction. They have worked through lots of new concepts and learnt a range of new skills in this unit of work. We are pleased to invite parents and carers to the Year 2 Mathematics Workshop, which will take place straight after school next Thursday 16th January. The workshop will explain the methods the children are taught for addition and subtraction, and how these precede the methods taught in Year 3. Parents who attended last year found the workshop extremely useful. We really hope you can make it.

In computing, the children began a unit of work focusing on online safety. They learnt how to use Purple Mash to refine a search, and to share their work electronically using display boards. They also revised how to search and share safely on the internet. In geography, the children learnt to locate the seven continents and five oceans of the world on a map. In PSHCE, the children revised our school rules and how to behave in the classroom and around school. They also made New Year's resolutions, deciding what they would like to improve this year.

In English next week, the children will continue to learn how to create an exciting setting before writing their own. In mathematics, the children will start a new unit of work exploring 2D and 3D shapes.

In geography, the children will learn to locate the polar regions and the equator on a world map. In history, they will look at photographs of Captain Robert Falcon Scott, who led expeditions to Antarctica, and answer questions based on what they can see. In RE, they will begin a new unit of work about places of worship by drawing a place that is special to them and explaining what makes it so important. In PSHCE, the children will start a new topic all about dreams and goals. In computing, they will be introduced to email as a form of communication. In science, the children will revise their knowledge of materials and their uses, which they learnt about in Year 1. In art and design, they will explore charcoal as a medium for drawing and learn to make marks and lines in different ways.

We hope you all have a restful weekend.

The Year 2 team

CLASS ATTENDANCE TROPHY

TROPHY-BEARING CLASS WITH THE BEST ATTENDANCE FOR THIS WEEK

RED FOX CLASS

100%

FANTASTIC ATTENDANCE – WELL DONE!!



STARS OF THE WEEK

Ladybird Nursery Classes	<p><i>Amelia for fantastic recall of facts about hibernation.</i></p> <p><i>Arlo for super recognition of rhyming words.</i></p> <p><i>Damola for a brilliant start to the new term.</i></p> <p><i>Murray for amazing recall of facts about hibernation.</i></p> <p><i>Bertie for creating a wonderful winter polar bear.</i></p>
Snowy Owls	<p><i>Archie for creating a fantastic story map.</i></p> <p><i>Chayson for being a kind and caring friend.</i></p>
Tawny Owls	<p><i>Raffaele for settling into Tawny Owl class so well.</i></p> <p><i>Elsie for lovely storytelling with actions.</i></p>
Barn Owls	<p><i>George K for using your story map to retell a wonderful story of 'The Gingerbread Man', with actions included!</i></p> <p><i>Wolfie for including so many details when retelling the story of 'The Gingerbread Man'.</i></p>
Red Foxes	<p><i>Chloe Ella for super maths this week and writing numbers 11-20 in words.</i></p> <p><i>Ivy for fantastic writing and using your imagination.</i></p>
Big Cats	<p><i>Myla for having fantastic ideas during class discussions.</i></p> <p><i>Andrew for always trying your best with your mathematics.</i></p>
Walker Bears	<p><i>Aadam for a super piece of independent writing all about the London Eye.</i></p> <p><i>Charlie for a wonderful start to the new term, always being ready for learning.</i></p>
Pelicans	<p><i>Olivia for your focus and hard work in mathematics and English lessons this week.</i></p> <p><i>Reuben for your fantastic mathematics contributions this week.</i></p>
Puffins	<p><i>Lennox - for writing an excellent sentence to describe a winter scene.</i></p> <p><i>Nadia - for returning to school with a positive attitude and making great learning choices.</i></p>

<p>Penguins</p>	<p><i>Aoife for excellent involvement in subtraction mathematics lessons.</i></p> <p><i>Honey-Rose for super listening and learning throughout your first week in Penguin class.</i></p> <p><i>Kian-Marc for fantastic listening during carpet time and super independent learning.</i></p>
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I hope you all have a restful and happy weekend.

Kindest regards,

*Rouane Mendel
Headteacher*

Coming to the town centre in **2025**
#LoveStevenagetc

KID ZONE
 New and improved
 "Kid Zone"
 15 February, 24 May,
 22 August,
 6 December

GET ACTIVE
 Get Active
 22 March

ANIMAL CRACKERS
 Animal Crackers
 (with the amazing
 Gruffalo Meet & Greet)
 19 April

Armed Forces Day
 21 June

Play Day
 7 August

Halloween-Tastic
 25 October

Christmas Light Switch On
 22 November
and more...

LITTLE LINGUISTS

@ BEDWELL COMMUNITY
CENTRE, STEVENAGE

SPANISH CLUB



Tuesday after school
FUN IN SPANISH



- 3.50–4.20pm Foundation / Reception / KS1
4.20–4.50pm KS2
- Trial session available and earlybird discount
- Starting Tuesday 14 January
- £6.95 per session + £12.00 per term for the course materials

e-mail: suzanne@littlelinguists.org.uk

whatsapp/call: 07857 974437

www.littlelinguists.org.uk

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SCHOOL DATES AND EVENTS SPRING TERM 1 2025

Monday 6th January 2025 children return to school

3.45 - 4.30 Tuesday 7th January 2025 Reception Tour

Monday 13th January 2025 Reception Screening

Wednesday 15th January 2025 deadline for applications for school places for Reception and Year 3 for September 2025

Thursday 16th January 2025 Census Day – school dinner options for Friday will be served

3.30 - 4.15 Thursday 16th January 2025 Year 2 mathematics workshop for parents in the hall

Friday 17th January – school dinner options for Thursday will be served

Week of 20th January 2025 KS1 Big Write with special surprise workshop!

Friday 24th January 2025 KS1 only magical dressing up day

Monday 20th January 2025 Reception Screening

Monday 27th January 2025 Reception Screening

2.50 - 3.10 Monday 27th January 2025 Stay and Read Year 1

Wednesday 29th January 2025 Lunar New Year Assembly for pupils only

2.50 - 3.10 Wednesday 29th January 2025 Stay and Read, Year 2

3.30 Thursday 30th January 2025 Phonics Workshop for Reception parents

Week of 3^d February 2025 Big Write Reception classes

8.50 – 9.50 Tuesday 4th February 2025 INCo/FROG Coffee Morning

Week of 10th February 2025 E-safety Week

2.40 Tuesday 11th February 2025 Safer Internet Day assembly for pupils

3.15 Thursday 13th February 2025 FROG/PTA Bake Sale

Monday 17th February 2025 - Friday 21st February 2025 HALF TERM

Monday 24th February 2025 Children return to school

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 5^h 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 30^h 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
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30						

October '24						
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28	29	30	31			

November '24						
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December '24						
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30	31					

January '25						
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27	28	29	30	31		

February '25						
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March '25						
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31						

April '25						
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28	29	30				

May '25						
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June '25						
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30						

July '25						
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28	29	30	31			

August '25						
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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)

