



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

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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,

Children have had a busy, productive week as the weather gets colder and they begin to get excited about the prospect of snow! Do remember to wrap your children and yourselves up warmly and please see details below of how we will let you know in case of school closure due to snow.

Children are all settled so well into school now and this is a term in which they can make great progress academically. Do please remember to try to read with your child each evening as this is the very best way of ensuring a life-long love of reading and learning.

We have very exciting news about our solar panels: these are finally being installed over the next two weeks! Some of you may remember that we made the Comet for this project as this is apparently the biggest ever installation of solar panels so far in a Hertfordshire school. It's tremendous for the environment and will ultimately save the school considerable energy costs as well as enabling us to contribute (for a remuneration) to the grid. It will also provide children with learning opportunities as the company provide an educational pack and talks and permit the children to see the solar panels. Huge thanks and congratulations to our School Council of last year who were involved in this exciting project.

We are hoping that this work won't cause too much disruption but please note that the parking lot will be even more squeezed for space over the next two weeks as the company will need to occupy two car parking spaces near the Reception block to the left hand side of the school. Apologies for this inconvenience and please can everyone be even more mindful about entering the parking lot.

Value of the month - Determination: Our value of the month for January is determination. Children will learn that determination means never giving up, even if things are hard. The value links to our Jigsaw PSHCE topic for this term, which focuses on dreams and goals. Children will learn that determination helps us to achieve our goals and be successful.

KS1 Big Write: This term's Big Write will take place next week for Years 1 and 2. The theme will be magic potions. We have planned lots of exciting activities for the week, including a wonderful interactive workshop.

Years 1 and 2 non-uniform day next Friday 24th January: 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.

Termly newsletters and topic webs: You should all be receiving class newsletters and topic webs soon; these will also go on the website. As ever, if you have any queries – or specialist interests that can contribute to the new topics – do let your child's class teacher know.

Year 2 mathematics workshop: Thank you to all those who attended the Year 2 mathematics workshop. I hope you all felt it was as highly informative as I did! Thank you to our inspiring, articulate and knowledgeable Year 2 teachers.

Phonics Workshop for Reception: This will take place Thursday 30th January after school. We are aiming to start at 3.30pm so the teachers have time to set up all the lovely phonics activities for the children; we hope you won't need to wait long. The training will take place in Tawny Owl and Snowy Owl Reception classes and your children will have an opportunity to try out all the phonics activities. Do come along – you will discover lots of ways you can support your child's progress at home!

Stay-and-read Year 1: Monday January 27th 2.50pm -3.10pm. Please come and join your child's class and share a book with them.

Stay-and-read Year 2: Wednesday January 29th 2.50pm -3.10pm. Please come and join your child's class and share a book with them.

Holocaust Memorial Day: This takes place next Monday January 27th and pupils will be acknowledging this day, if age-appropriate and in age-appropriate ways, within school.

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

Reception Screening Tests: These will now take place on 27th January, 3rd February and 25th February.

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.

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 and thank you very much to everyone who has already donated.

Nursery: In Nursery this week, the children excitedly started their new topic about African animals. They loved singing 'The Jungle Song' and enjoyed listening to different stories about jungle animals. They learnt the jungle has a canopy made from lots of trees and the weather is very hot and wet. The children were eager to see the new jungle role play and become jungle explorers. They had special badges to wear and loved using the binoculars to hunt for animals. Bear said, 'I'm in the jungle, I need a flash light!' Muriha spotted a snake and said, 'Arghh, snake... it there!'



In Expressive Art and Design, the children looked closely at different African animals and chose an animal to make using a range of media. They took great care to use appropriate colours, paint the shape of the animal and add details to make it look just like the real-life animal. These will become a fabulous display in the Nursery very soon!

In phonics, the children played the game Silly Soup using objects that rhyme. Everyone enjoyed joining in with 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 the tune of 'Pop Goes the Weasel'.

In mathematics, the children counted the syllables in animal names. They learnt 'crocodile' and 'elephant' have 3 syllables and 'giraffe' and 'zebra' have 2 syllables. The children continued to consolidate their understanding of positional language and explored using 'in front' and 'behind'.

In PSHCE, as part of our dreams and goals topic, the children have been challenged to put on their coat by themselves, or to zip up their coat. They have shown a tremendous effort in the challenge, and we are so proud of how hard they have tried.

Next week, the children will be learning about Africa. They will learn facts about Africa, create a clay pinch pot and explore making rock art. In phonics, the children will continue to identify rhyming words and create a rhyming string beginning with 'rug' and 'slug'.

Reception: This week during snack time, the children generated 'wow' words (adjectives) to describe the fruit or vegetables in the bowl. For example, the children suggested the words 'bumpy', 'hard', 'delicious', and 'healthy' for carrots. In literacy, the children used 'wow' words in simple sentence to describe the cat character from the story of 'The Gingerbread Man'. Over the next few weeks in literacy, the children will continue to use 'wow' words in their sentence writing. The children have listened to more versions of 'The Gingerbread Man' and made comparisons between the stories they have heard.

This week's poem is titled 'One Little Bear', poet unknown.

One little bear wondering what to do,
Along came another one, then there were two.
Two little bears climbing up a tree,
Along came another one, then there were three.
Three little bears ate an apple core,
Along came another one, then there were four.
Four little bears found honey in a hive,

Along came another one, then there were five.

In mathematics the children have been subitising. Subitising means recognising an amount without counting. The children focused on an amount up to five by looking at candles on cakes, arrangements of spots on paper plates and dropping five double-sided coloured counters onto paper. When playing a game with their friends, the children used a 0 to 5 spotted dice to move their counter from one end of a track to the other, subitising the number of spots shown on the dice.

In Understanding the World, the children continued to find out more about seasonal changes. For their second drawing of a specific tree in the school grounds, the children used charcoal, and this drawing will be added to their 'Seasonal Changes of a Tree' book.

In RE, the children listened to the story 'A Wedding Wish for Puddles' by Gill Vaisey. They discussed why two people get married. Some of the answers from the children included 'because people want to live together', 'because people want to have children' and most importantly 'because two people get married'. However, Cody in Tawny Owl class produced the best reason for why people get married by saying, 'one person needs to wash the dishes!'

Some children have brought in photographs for a display about weddings in their class. Ariella brought in photographs of her grandparents', great grandparents' and both sets of her great, great parents' weddings. Thank you to everyone who brought in photographs. The display is amazing!

The children used their senses to investigate the spice ginger. They planted some ginger root and over the next few weeks the children will be watching for signs of growth. When investigating a piece of root ginger, Harrison in Snowy Owl class said, 'It looks like a dinosaur bone!'



Next week in literacy, the children will be writing a sentence with a 'wow' word included to describe the dog character from the story of 'The Gingerbread Man'. In mathematics, the children will be investigating the composition of 6, 7, and 8 and looking at arrangements of these numbers as spots on a ladybird.

In Understanding the World, the children will be 'science detectives', continuing to find out more about seasonal changes. They will be investigating the woodland area looking for signs of winter. The children will use iPads to take photographic evidence of this season.

Year 1: The Year 1 children continued to read the wintry story of 'Bear and Wolf' by Daniel Salmieri in English this week. It was fun to be an adjective detective looking for the exciting describing words in the text. The children learnt that an adjective describes a noun. They wrote their own descriptions of the character 'Bird' in the story using adjectives. In phonics, the children continued learning about alternative

pronunciations. This week, they learnt about hard and soft 'c', as in cat, cap, city and cell and hard and soft 'g', as in get, game, gem and magic. They have also been learning how to read and write the word 'because'. Our Book of the Week was 'Ada Twist, Scientist' by Andrea Beaty, a brilliant rhyming book, celebrating curiosity, the power of perseverance and the importance of asking "why?". Please click the link to enjoy the story. [Ada Twist, Scientist](#)

In mathematics, the children have learnt about teen numbers up to 19. They have continued to build the numbers using physical resources including ten frames, rekenreks and base 10 cubes and rods. They have also secured their understanding that 20 is made up of 20 ones or 2 tens. The children considered some reasoning and problem-solving questions that involved understanding tens and ones and place value.



Forest School was very exciting as we launched the learning of our new skill for this half term: whittling. The children worked under close supervision with the teacher to practise safely using a vegetable peeler to whittle a carrot. They wore a glove on the hand holding the carrot and learnt to scrape the peeler away from their bodies. A few children each week will learn the skill with the teacher until all children have had a turn by the half term holiday.



In PSHCE the children learnt that to achieve a goal we follow simple steps and that we learn by watching and listening to others, including our friends. Meanwhile, in art, they made a range of cool blue tints by gradually adding white to blue paint. The children enjoyed seeing how many blues they could make. In computing, the children completed a range of sorting activities in Purple Mash, using the iPads. The children learnt all about herbivores, omnivores and carnivores in science.

Next week will be our very exciting Big Write week with a magical theme! On Friday, the children are invited to dress up as a magical character. In mathematics the children will start to use a number line to secure their understanding of place value of numbers up to 20. Thank you to those of you who have already sent in cardboard tubes for making binoculars in Forest School next week. We do need more, so please keep sending them in. We also need cardboard tubes to make windsocks in science as part of our learning about the weather and seasonal change.

Finally, shortly before Christmas you should have received a message about our exciting Year 1 trip to Shepreth Wildlife Park, which will take place on 28th March. It is possible now to give consent for your child to take part and to start making payments on Arbor.

We wish you a wonderful weekend.

Year 2: Thank you to those who were able to join us for the Year 2 Mathematics Workshop yesterday. We hope you found it useful. The workshop focused on how we teach addition and subtraction. The Year 2 teachers demonstrated how we break down the elements of these concepts for children, the manipulatives that are used to support learning and how the methods children are taught provide the basis for the column method, which the children will learn in Year 3. The workshop was recorded and is available on the school website at [The Giles Nursery and Infants' School - Year 2 mathematics workshop for parents](#)

In English this week, the children continued to learn how to create a descriptive setting in their writing. They learnt how to pair verbs and adverbs to explain how an action is happening; for example, 'the ice glistened brightly.' They learnt about similes and had a try at writing their own; for example, 'the long icicles were as sharp as a dagger'. The children used the features of an effective setting to write a description of Narnia. They wrote with such expressive language – well done Year 2!

In mathematics this week, the children learnt about 2D and 3D shape. They revised the names of 2D and 3D shapes and learnt about irregular shapes. They explored the number of sides and vertices on 2D shapes and used squared paper to draw them.

In geography, the children learnt about the polar regions and the equator and located them on a globe and a map. In RE, they considered what makes a place special and drew a place that is special to them. In PSHCE, the children reflected on their achievements and how they felt when they accomplished something new. In computing, the children explored email using Purple Mash, learning about the different functions and actions and having a go at emailing and sending attachments. In history, they examined a photograph of Sir Robert Falcon Scott, an Antarctic explorer, and answered questions based on what they could see.

Next week is our Big Write week in key stage one. The children will have a surprise workshop on Monday and a week of fantastic activities linked to our exciting magic potions theme. They will complete a piece of independent writing before finishing the week with a magic-themed dress-up day on Friday. 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.

In mathematics, the children will continue to learn about shape. In geography, they will learn about the features, climate and conditions of Antarctica. In science, they will compare the suitability of materials for different purposes. In RE, they will explore a mosque and find out about some of the rituals that take place there. In PSHCE, they will think about how they learn and what they are good at. They will learn the importance of persevering even when they find things difficult. In art and design, they will learn about artists that use charcoal and explore their work.

We hope you have a wonderful weekend.

CLASS ATTENDANCE TROPHY

TROPHY-BEARING CLASS WITH THE BEST ATTENDANCE FOR THIS WEEK

BIG CATS

98.6%

FANTASTIC ATTENDANCE – WELL DONE!!



STARS OF THE WEEK

Ladybird Nursery Classes	<i>Bear for super use of positional language.</i> <i>Ezak for creating a wonderful jungle animal.</i> <i>Marley for fantastic effort in the hall during PE.</i> <i>Hallie for being a kind friend to others.</i> <i>Evelyn for super use of positional language.</i>
Snowy Owls	<i>Molly for being able to subitise.</i> <i>Arlo for applying your phonic knowledge to write a descriptive sentence about a cat.</i>
Tawny Owls	<i>Darcey for brilliant independent sentence writing.</i> <i>Oliver for amazing independent subitising.</i>
Barn Owls	<i>George G for drawing a fantastic winter tree using charcoal.</i> <i>Alfie for using your phonic knowledge to write a super sentence about a cat using 'wow' words.</i>
Red Foxes	<i>Jude for super independent writing describing the owl in the 'Bear and Wolf' story.</i> <i>Toby for fantastic work in science drawing and labelling a carnivore, omnivore and herbivore.</i>
Big Cats	<i>Olaf for fantastic whitling in Forest School.</i> <i>Isla for making wonderful shapes in gymnastics.</i>
Walker Bears	<i>Luca for wonderful participation in guided reading.</i> <i>Mya-Jae for showing super reasoning about the number 20 in mathematics.</i>
Pelicans	<i>Kara for always being a kind and caring classmate.</i> <i>Ellie for writing an amazing winter setting.</i>
Puffins	<i>Bela for excellent work in recognising 2d shapes.</i> <i>Jacob for excellent work in recognising 2d shapes.</i> <i>Ava for excellent work in recognising 2d shapes.</i>
Penguins	<i>Eliot for always being enthusiastic to learn.</i> <i>Milla for always being kind and friendly.</i>

I hope you all have a restful and happy weekend.

Kindest regards,

*Rouane Mendel
Headteacher*



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

SCHOOL DATES AND EVENTS SPRING TERM 1 2025

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

Monday 27th January Holocaust Memorial Day

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 3rd 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 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)

