



THE
GILES NURSERY
AND
INFANTS'
SCHOOL



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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,

Despite the inclement weather, we have all had a wonderful week. All classes have celebrated Lunar New Year, with Reception and Nursery classes devising a wide range of terrific activities including song, dance, making lanterns and a wide range of beautiful artwork. In Nursery, all the children were offered delicious noodles and we were amazed by how well many of our youngest children could manage chopsticks! Nursery children have absolutely loved the new role play area, which has been transformed by our creative and inspirational Nursery staff into the most fantastic Chinese restaurant. It has certainly been a week of immersive learning. We wish the very best to all families who celebrate this occasion.

Stay-and-read Years 1 and 2: Thank you to all those who were able to come in to support their child during these sessions and we hope you enjoyed the opportunity to visit these beautiful classrooms and spend time with your child.

Thank you also to everyone who supports the weekly Reception Stay-and-Read and Nursery Stay-and-Play. The children love you coming in!

The Reception Phonics Workshop was beautifully presented and very well attended. The teachers hope it has given you some fantastic ideas about developing your child's reading and talking skills at home.

Holocaust Memorial Day: This was honoured sensitively and feedback from children and adults alike is that it was an important event to mark at a time when in some areas across the world intolerance for minorities, whether it be immigrants, Jewish people, Muslims or other groups, seems to be increasing. For our young pupils, the most important learning element is an increased understanding of inclusivity, tolerance, respect and kindness and the determination to make our locality and our country a safe, secure and accepting place in which all of us can lead good and peaceful lives.

E-Safety Week: Next week we will be celebrating E-Safety week in school with Mrs Dalton 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 that you find the E-Safety updates we send you useful in supporting your work 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.

Attendance: *Please be aware that parents are legally required to bring their children to school during the school term unless their child is medically deemed unfit to attend.*

Just to let you know that if a pupil has five school days of unauthorised absence across a 10-week period, County may choose to levy a fine of £80 to each parent, even when parents live together. If this fine isn't paid within 21 days, it goes up to £160 per parent. Failure to pay may result in prosecution for the offence of not ensuring your child attends school on school days.

Of course, no one can help their child being ill but please don't keep your child off school for colds and other minor illnesses. We are happy to help by giving children Calpol etc. Holidays should not be taken during school time.

The Ofsted expectation is of a minimum attendance of 96%. If your child has too much absence for reasons that our Attendance Officer considers insufficient, they might require us to ask you to provide medical evidence each time your child is ill.

Solar Panels: *I'm delighted to announce that our main roof is now fully covered with solar panels, and they are already operating and generating electricity!*

Our solar energy will generate electricity that will more than cover all the school's electrical usage and this is fantastic in so many ways - for our expenditure and for the environment.

Speaking of the environment, please remember to turn off your cars while parked in the school car park. Parents have emailed me to notify me that many vehicles are being left running. Unfortunately, air pollution is known to be detrimental to health, and at this time of year particularly many people find their asthma is worse. Thank you for turning your vehicle off when parked.

Bake Sale: *Please come along and support our bake sale on Wednesday 12th February after school in the dining hall from 3.15. Store-bought or homemade, all contributions are gratefully accepted; please bring any donations to the school office on the day. Thank you in advance for your generosity. Such events help to raise vital funds to support the 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*

Cold weather: *Please make sure your children are wrapped up warmly so that they can really enjoy this bright, cold weather. Please provide your child with a named hat, scarf and gloves for outdoor play - thank you!*

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.*

Nursery: *In Nursery this week the children thoroughly enjoyed celebrating Lunar New Year. They recalled the Makaton sign for 'celebrate' and learnt how people around the world celebrate the Lunar New Year. The children were fascinated to find out how Chinese families celebrate and loved watching a Chinese dragon parade. They learnt red is the luckiest colour in Chinese culture and during a celebration, people will have red lanterns, new red outfits, and red envelopes for gifts of money. Reggie S remembered and shared with his friends, 'Red is lucky.'*



In physical development, the children enjoyed working together as a team to move like a dragon. They held a scarf and moved up and down to create wonderful flowing movements. In expressive arts and design, the children were excited to create a Chinese dragon. They worked carefully to cut out the dragon head, added strips of paper to create a body and then decorated it in bright colours.

The children enjoyed the story 'Cleversticks' by Bernard Ashley and were eager to have a try at using chopsticks to eat noodles. Ava commented, 'I like eating with chopsticks.' Evelyn shared, 'I've eaten noodles at home with chopsticks.' They had a wonderful time in the Chinese takeaway role-play area, being a shop keeper or customer. Caleb took on the role of a customer and placed his order saying, 'I would like something in a sauce.' Hallie enjoyed serving her friends and said, 'Go to the table, it's coming right up.'



In phonics, the children continued to build their awareness of rhyming words. They recalled lots of rhyming pairs and created the rhyming string 'rat, hat, cat, mat, bat'. Our rhyming string this week began with 'pig and wig'. The children were challenged to finish a rhyming sentence this week and worked hard to guess the final word. For example, 'I know a word that rhymes with spoon. You can see it at night and the word is ... moon.'

Next week, the children will enjoy a range of activities linked to the story 'Dear Zoo' by Rod Cambell. In PSHCE, they will learn about different jobs and think about a job they would like to do when they get older.

The week beginning 10th February we will be learning about animals as pets. If possible, we would love to share any photographs of your child with a family pet. These can be handed to your child's teacher or sent to admin@gilesinfants.herts.sch.uk

Reception: *This week in literacy the children continued to apply their phonic knowledge to write a simple sentence and include a 'wow' word (adjective). This week, they have been writing about the cow from the traditional tale of the Gingerbread Man. Some examples of sentences written by the children are 'The cow has four hooves,' 'The cow has black patches,' and 'The cow has a grey nose.'*

In mathematics, the children have focused on doubles to eight. They enjoyed playing the caterpillar game, throwing the dice, and doubling the number of spots to place a counter on the colourful caterpillar. The children loved the doubling game where they had to find their partner when using Numicon. When the children in Tawny Owls were discussing doubles, Mia said, 'When you add two of the same number it is a double!'



On Wednesday, the children celebrated Lunar New Year. They discovered why this festival is a huge celebration around the world and listened to the story 'The Great Race: The Story of the Chinese Zodiac' by Emily Hines and how the order of the animals came about. Annabelle in Barn Owl class said, 'I am a rat. My mummy looked it up when I was born; she said I was born in the year of the rat.' The children loved making a dragon to dance



with, Chinese lanterns and lotus blossom cards. They enjoyed the challenge of using chopsticks to create Chinese takeaway dishes, pretending to sit down as a family and

eat a Chinese meal. When talking about Lunar New Year, Bowie-Moon in Snowy Owl class said, 'Oranges bring good luck!'



This week's poem, 'Chinese Dragon', is to celebrate Lunar New Year

*Dragon, dragon, I see you,
Scales in red, green and blue.
Dragon, dragon, I smell you,
Just like the early morning dew.
Dragon, dragon, I hear you,
I can ROAR just like you!*



Next week in literacy, the children will be participating in Big Write and enjoying the story 'The Gingerbread Girl' by Lisa Campbell Ernst. They will be finding out if this character, like the Gingerbread Man, ends up being snapped up by the fox! The children will be labelling the character and writing a sentence to support their labelling.

In mathematics, the children will be focusing on length. They will be using the key vocabulary 'long/longer/longest/short/shorter/shortest' when investigating different lengths of ribbon and making comparisons. The children will listen to the story 'I can only draw worms' by Will Mabbitt.

In Understanding the World, the children will be 'science detectives', investigating what happens to a gingerbread man biscuit figure when it is placed in oil, water, milk or fruit juice.

The Musician of the Month for February is Tchaikovsky. The children will be watching clips from different ballets such as 'Sleeping Beauty', 'Swan Lake' and 'The Nutcracker'.

Thank you to everyone who came to the phonics workshop yesterday. The Reception staff hope the ideas of phonics activities will inspire your children with their reading and writing. For families who were unable to attend, your child will be coming home today with a handout of phonic activities which do not cost a single penny to play.

Each week the children receive a Super Reader certificate if they read three or more times at home each week. These certificates are handed out each Friday. This week, the Barn Owl class handed out 22 certificates to the children, the largest number yet! Tawny Owls and Snowy Owls had similar numbers. Please do listen to your child read at home. Your children absolutely love getting a Super Readers certificate on a Friday as they are so proud.

Year 1: Thank you if you helped your child to take part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch. Luca in Walker Bear class enjoyed telling the class about the birds he spotted and showing a super bird-spotting poster. The children were excited to have taken part and to share their knowledge about different types of birds. In computing, the children used the program 2count in Purple Mash to input data collected from the RSPB Big Garden Bird Watch and create a chart to show the results. This is part of their work on pictograms and handling data. In Forest School, the children made bird feeders using pipe-cleaners and cereal hoops.

Some children learnt our Forest School tools skill for this half-term – whittling. All the children are showing great responsibility when learning their tools skill, by listening carefully to the safety instructions and focusing all their attention on the task. If they ask you if they can help peel the carrots for dinner, it will be because they would really like to show you their whittling skill! We have taught them to scrape the peeler away from their body.

The Year 1 children showed great respect when learning about Holocaust Memorial Day on Monday. They listened carefully and found out that we can all speak out against discrimination and promote love between all people. On Wednesday the children learnt about Lunar New Year and enjoyed watching a lion dance and a dragon dance. They listened to the story of how the years were named and worked out that 2025 is the year of the snake.

Our Book of the Week was 'Sofia Valdez, Future Prez' by Andrea Beaty. Sofia Valdez, is a child who has an idea to change the local landfill into a park. When she is told she can't because she is just a child, Sofia sets out to prove she can! Please click the link if you would like to listen at home. [Sofia Valdez, Future Prez](#) Thank you to all who were able to attend Stay-and-Read on Monday. It was wonderful to see so many of you there.

In phonics the children revisited the digraph 'ea'. They recalled that it makes the sound /ea/ in 'sea' and 'bead' and learnt that it can make the alternative /e/ sound as heard in the word 'bread'. Similarly, they also learnt that the digraph 'ie' in 'pie' has the sound /ee/ in 'field'.



In mathematics, the children began to show their teachers everything they have learnt about place value over the last three weeks. They have worked tremendously and next week they will move on to addition and subtraction within 20. You could help to prepare your child for this by playing lots of counting games, particularly counting on. For example, the counting on card game from creativefamilyfun.net: take the picture cards out of a deck of playing cards. Use one or two dice. Take the top card. Roll the dice. Starting from the number shown on the card, count on the amount shown on the dice. Use one dice to keep it simple, add extra challenge by rolling two. Take turns. On your turn, think aloud so your child can see how you are finding the answer.

The children have been keeping a weather diary in science, observing daily temperatures, sunset time, rainfall and looking out of the window to observe the sun, clouds, rain and wind. They have also used the BBC Weather website to look up the daily forecast for SG1.

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'. Perhaps you could discuss at home what your favourite traditional tale is and why. The children will also start to design a puppet theatre in design and technology. If you have any empty (nut-free) cereal boxes, please save them for us and bring them into school next week. Thank you.

We hope you have a wonderful weekend.

Year 2: It has been a lovely week of learning in Year 2. In English, the children began learning about fact files. They looked at non-fiction books and learnt about the features, including the contents page, index and glossary. They looked closely at the page layout in non-fiction books and how it is different to story books. They discovered that a page in a non-fiction book will usually have a heading, photographs, diagrams, labels and fact boxes. The children learnt how to start a question with 'when', 'what', 'where', 'which' and 'how' and end it with a question mark. They matched questions to statements and thought of their own questions about a polar animal. They learnt how to make notes to answer their questions.

In mathematics, the children have been exploring 3D shapes, including cubes, cuboids, pyramids and prisms. They learnt about faces, edges and vertices, before sorting 3D shapes by different criteria; for example, 'shapes that roll' and 'shapes that do not roll', or 'shapes with more than seven faces' and 'shapes with less than seven faces'.

In history, the children learnt about the first expeditions to the South Pole and discussed why Sir Robert Falcon Scott's journey was unsuccessful. In geography, they sorted features of Antarctica into 'human' and 'physical' categories. In science, they explored the properties of different materials and in art and design they learnt how to use perspective to create 3D drawings.

On Wednesday, the children learnt about Lunar New Year, including some of the traditions and rituals. They enjoyed lots of activities, including making pop-up cards and completing crafts with a snake theme.

Next week in English, the children will continue their research about polar animals and write their own fact file. In mathematics, they will begin to learn about money. In geography, they will compare the features of Antarctica to the features of Stevenage. In science, they will investigate the suitability of different materials to make a sleeping mat for an expedition to the South Pole. In RE, they will learn about a Sikh Gurdwara. In PSHCE, they will spend time working towards their chosen goal. In art and design, they will create a landscape scene using charcoal and in history, they will compare the expeditions of Sir Robert Falcon Scott and Roald Amundsen.

We hope you have a wonderful weekend.

The Year 2 team

CLASS ATTENDANCE TROPHY

TROPHY-BEARING CLASS WITH THE BEST ATTENDANCE FOR THIS WEEK

BIG CAT CLASS

96.2%

FANTASTIC ATTENDANCE – WELL DONE!!



STARS OF THE WEEK

<p>Ladybird Nursery Classes</p>	<p>Mahum - for showing lots of confidence in taking part in dressing-up using our dragon head.</p> <p>Charlotte - for showing lots of interest in Lunar New Year and trying your noodles.</p> <p>Kai - for having a go at writing lots of Chinese numerals.</p> <p>Caleb - For using your fantastic imagination whilst exploring our Chinese restaurant.</p> <p>Harper - For using your fantastic imagination whilst exploring our Chinese restaurant.</p>
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	<i>Lucas - For using your fantastic imagination whilst exploring our Chinese restaurant.</i>
<i>Snowy Owls</i>	<i>Roman for being able to independently order numbers to 10.</i> <i>Kennedy for applying your phonic knowledge to write a sentence about a cow.</i>
<i>Tawny Owls</i>	<i>Henry O for incredible independent sentence writing with 'wow' words.</i> <i>Amari for making a beautiful card to celebrate Lunar New Year.</i>
<i>Barn Owls</i>	<i>Freya for fantastic recognition of doubles when playing the game 'Doubles to 8'.</i> <i>Maya for creating a fantastic dragon to dance with when celebrating Lunar New Year.</i>
<i>Red Foxes</i>	<i>ChloeElla for a fantastic story opener using different adjectives to describe a setting and animal of your own choice.</i> <i>Nyameye for super PE creating a sequence using shapes.</i>
<i>Big Cats</i>	<i>Muna for creating a fantastic mud painting of a tree during Forest School.</i> <i>Oscar for a super story opener using different adjectives.</i>
<i>Walker Bears</i>	<i>Diana for fantastic phonics sorting words by the sound made by the digraph 'ea'.</i> <i>Jacob for demonstrating super understanding of place value in mathematics.</i>
<i>Pelicans</i>	<i>Kalanne for your hard work in English this week.</i> <i>Veronika for leading PE games on the Year 2 playground.</i>
<i>Puffins</i>	<i>Bella - for demonstrating a good understanding of non-fiction texts</i> <i>Ruben - for persevering with his science learning.</i>
<i>Penguins</i>	<i>Abi for always being ready to listen and learn.</i> <i>Wynter for working well as a team and being a fantastic leader.</i>

VALUE OF THE MONTH - DETERMINATION

<i>Barn Owls</i>	<i>Annabelle Albert</i>
<i>Snowy Owls</i>	<i>Kennedy Harrison</i>
<i>Tawny Owls</i>	<i>Oliver Darcey Max</i>
<i>Big Cats</i>	<i>Andrew Myla</i>
<i>Red Foxes</i>	<i>Oscar W Nyameye</i>
<i>Walker Bears</i>	<i>Aadam Blaze</i>
<i>Pelicans</i>	<i>Connor Casey</i>
<i>Penguins</i>	<i>Kian-Marc Alana</i>
<i>Puffins</i>	<i>Evie</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

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 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 Wednesday 12th 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 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
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28	29	30	31			

November '24						
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25	26	27	28	29	30	

December '24						
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

January '25						
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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
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

March '25						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
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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
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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
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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
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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
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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
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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)

