



THE
GILES NURSERY
AND
INFANTS'
SCHOOL



Headteacher: Mrs Rouane Mendel
Deputy Headteacher: Miss Lisa Hill
Assistant Headteacher: Mrs Tania Dalton

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19.12.2025

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

'There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.'
Nelson Mandela

Dear Parents/Carers,

What a wonderful week we have all had in school!

Our inspirational FROG team have excelled themselves this week, decorating the hall in sparkling style for Christmas dinner and giving their time to help out and serve for the duration of the meal. That was kindness itself and I thank them on behalf of the school from the bottom of my heart. The children loved their meal and enjoyed pulling their Christmas crackers! Thank you to our kind FROGs who give our school so much.

In the lead up to Christmas at Giles, we celebrate each day of Advent by giving a book to a child. This year's book is 'A World for Me and You Where Everyone is Welcome' by Uju Asika and Jennie Poh. The lucky recipients this year were Felix and David in Nursery; Myles, Zainab and Mahum in Reception; Finley, Ariella, Ariya, Mina and Hadley in Year 1 and Nancy-Mae, Ahmed, Afna, Shaineha and Jaxon in Year 2. We hope you all enjoy this beautiful book.



Party Day has been the glorious highlight of the week!! The children looked so beautiful in their party clothes. Everyone had the most fantastic time playing games and enjoying their treats – and a very special visitor went to all classes bearing gifts! Please see a selection of photos in the class sections below.

The children have worked so hard and are all ready for their break.

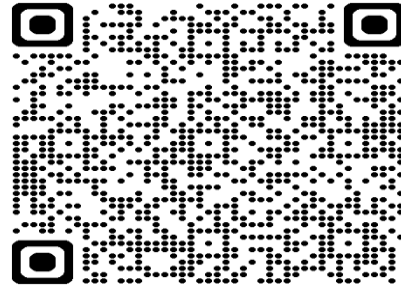
Merry Christmas to all those who celebrate this festival and a very Happy Hanukkah to everyone celebrating this lovely festival. I hope you all have a peaceful, restful and joyful holiday and I look forward to seeing you all again on Tuesday 6th January 2026.

Athletics after school club closing: The trainer running this club has just informed me that unfortunately due to personal circumstances she is unable to continue running this club in the new year.

E-Safety guidance on AI toys: The National College has released guidance for parents and carers about safe use of AI toys. There are lots of attractive toys that have AI capacity built in. Please take a moment to read the guide for top tips. You can find it on our webpage: [The Giles Nursery and Infants' School - Wake-Up Wednesday e-Safety information](#). It is also included at the end of this newsletter.

Supply cleaner: If anyone is interested in this role and helping to keep our beautiful school clean when the agency cleaners are ill or we need a bit of extra help and you need a few extra pennies, please come in and speak to the office.

Prospective Parent Tours: Applications are being accepted for Nursery places to start January/September 2026. Applications with Hertfordshire County Council for Reception places to start September 2026 close on 15th January 2026.



Tours of our Nursery and Reception classes are available by appointment on Thursday 8th January from 3.45 to 4.30pm. Please use the QR code to book your tickets or call us on 01438 359747.

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.

Nursery: The children had the most enjoyable week continuing to explore a variety of festive activities. They enjoyed singing Christmas songs and particularly enjoyed 'Jingle Bells'. The children were excited to create special crafts and gifts for their grown-ups, including a wonderful calendar and Christmas card.

In expressive arts and design, the children practised their scissor control as they created their own snowflakes and decorated their very own Christmas trees using glitter, paint and ribbons. They had a wonderful time using their imaginations to write their letters to Santa and created their very own Santa faces, using cotton wool for Santa's fluffy white beard. The children also created their very own Rudolf Christmas tree decoration. The Ladybirds are very proud of all their work this term and were excited to share this with their grown-ups.

The children counted the sleeps until Party Day, the Christmas holidays and some long-awaited birthdays. Party Day was a wonderful celebration, with a magical visitor and a brilliant entertainer. All the children joined in the festive games, singing, dancing, playing in bubbles and sharing some yummy party food.



The Nursery team would like to take this opportunity in sharing how proud we are of all the Ladybird children and thank you for all your support this term. We wish you a very Merry Christmas.

Reception: *This week, the children have listened to many stories linked to Christmas and have enjoyed participating in a range of activities linked to the festive season. They have loved singing Christmas songs such as 'Jingle Bells,' 'When Santa got stuck up the chimney' and 'Five mince pies in the baker's shop.'*

In mathematics, the children have looked at the routine of their day. They had to sort day and night pictures linked to Christmas family activities at home.

This week's poem of the week is 'Winter Poem' by Dorothy Aldis:

*The street cars are like frosted cakes,
All covered up with cold snowflakes.
The horses' hooves scrunch on the street;
Their eyelashes are white with sleet.
And everywhere the people go,
With faces tickled by the snow.*

Please encourage your child to read the poem to a member of your family. These weekly poems are to aid your child's fluency in reading. The children really enjoy learning the poems each week.

This week in phonics, the children have learnt the trigraphs 'air', 'ure' and the digraph 'er'. Please see below the patten the staff use to help the children form the letters correctly.

'air' – Make a curve, go up to the top, come back down and flick. Lift. Start at the top, come down and flick. Lift and dot. Lift. Start at the top, come down, bounce back up and over.

'ure' – Start at the top, come down and curve. Go back up, come down and flick. Lift. Start at the top, come down, bounce back up and over. Lift. Start with a loop then make a curve.

'er' – Start with a loop, then make a curve. Lift. Start at the top, come down, bounce back up and over.

The children loved their Christmas dinner on Wednesday, especially opening their crackers, and were all keen to hear the different jokes. On Thursday, they had a wonderful time at their class Christmas party and loved singing Christmas songs to Father Christmas.

Next term, the children will focus on science investigations and food technology linked to a traditional tale and how a character can travel safely when on a journey.

Stay and Read begins on Friday 9th January from 8.45 until 9.15am. Everyone is welcome. Please come in and read lots of exciting books with your child.

All the staff and children in Reception would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Year 1: What a very joyous week we have had in Year 1! From Christmas lunch day to Christmas party day (with a special visitor bearing sack loads of gifts for the classes), to games, singing, music, crafting and celebrations of our fabulous learning, the week has been exciting, happy and merry.

Thank you for all the gifts, cards and well-wishes you have given to the staff. We love our work, and it is an honour to play a small part in your children's lives at such a key point in their development.

We are so proud of all the learning the children have completed this term and their superb transition to Year 1. Do take a look at some of the photographs of their learning: [The Giles Nursery and Infants' School - Photographs - Autumn 2025](#)



The children are all settled beautifully in the year and ready to continue to grow when they return to us on Tuesday 6th January. Please remember that Forest School will start the week of Monday 12th January.

In the meantime, we wish you all a relaxing, restful and happy holiday time, however you are using it. We hope you enjoy the crafts the children have brought home with them over the past few days.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the Year 1 team.

Year 2: What a wonderful festive week it has been in Year 2! The children have been busy making lots of Christmas crafts, which we hope you will appreciate at home. On Wednesday, the children enjoyed their Christmas dinner, complete with Christmas songs, crackers and of course, Christmas jokes!

On Thursday afternoon, the children had a fantastic time at their Christmas party. They enjoyed some party games, ate their picnic snacks and opened some presents, following a visit from Father Christmas himself!



We would like to thank you for your generous Christmas gifts and for all your support this term. We wish you a wonderful Christmas and look forward to seeing you in the New Year, when school re-opens on Tuesday 6th January 2026.


With best wishes,

The Year 2 team

Kindest regards

*Rouane Mendel
Headteacher*

CLASS ATTENDANCE TROPHIES
TROPHY-BEARING CLASSES WITH THE BEST ATTENDANCE FOR THIS WEEK

<i>Reception</i>	<i>Key stage one</i>
Barn Owls	Walker Bears
97.5%	98.2%
FANTASTIC ATTENDANCE – WELL DONE!	
	

STARS OF THE WEEK

Ladybirds Class	<i>Frankee for being a kind friend in Ladybird Class.</i> <i>Rianna R for taking part in a variety of Christmas craft activities.</i>
Snowy Owl Class	<i>Summer for being a kind and helpful member of Snowy Owl class.</i> <i>Zainab for being a kind and helpful member of Snowy Owl class.</i> <i>Billy for being able to sequence the day.</i>
Tawny Owl Class	<i>Lucas for generating lots of words that start with the letter ‘t’ during handwriting.</i> <i>Avlin for fantastic independent letter formation during phonics.</i>
Barn Owl Class	<i>Hallie for always being a kind friend in the Barn Owl class.</i> <i>Teddy for always using his manners at lunchtime.</i> <i>Ava for super sorting of day and night pictures in mathematics.</i>
Value of the month - resilience	<i>Snowy Owls: Emma and Bertie</i> <i>Tawny Owls: Alfie, Augustin and Ava</i>

	<i>Barn Owls: Maeve, Andrew and Bertie</i>
<i>Big Cat Class</i>	<i>Eshaal for trying her best with reading.</i> <i>Ella-Rose for writing a wonderful sentence about the Christmas story.</i> <i>Hadley for super sequencing of the Christmas story.</i> <i>Mya for writing a fantastic sentence about the Christmas story.</i>
<i>Red Fox Class</i>	<i>Joshua for super improvement in reading.</i> <i>Theo for fantastic independent writing of the Christmas story.</i>
<i>Walker Bear Class</i>	<i>Finley for always challenging himself with his learning.</i> <i>Yoosuf for always demonstrating gentle and calm behaviour in class.</i> <i>Ayla for always writing carefully and neatly.</i> <i>Raff for coming to school every day with something exciting that he has learnt to tell his teacher.</i>
<i>Value of the month - resilience</i>	<i>Walker Bears: Tillie and Elijah</i> <i>Big Cats: Ellis and Bear</i> <i>Red Fox: Freya and Ayla</i>
<i>Pelican Class</i>	<i>Lola for writing a super description about a wintry setting.</i> <i>Samuel for being a kind member of Pelican class.</i>
<i>Penguin Class</i>	<i>Remi for great work with similes.</i> <i>Noah for describing a fantastic setting in English.</i>
<i>Puffin Class</i>	<i>Toby for making his Christmas card independently and enjoying all the Christmas activities.</i> <i>Ella-Rae for a superb re-telling of the Nativity story.</i>
<i>Value of the month - resilience</i>	<i>Pelicans: Blaze and Ahmed</i> <i>Penguins: Dev</i> <i>Puffins: Hannah and Layla</i>

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI TOYS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

This festive season, the newest toys on the shelves do not just blink or make noise; they listen. Many now come with artificial intelligence (AI), allowing them to talk, learn, and even respond to a child's emotions. These toys can be educational and engaging, but they also collect, store, and process information. This guide explains what that means for families and why it matters.

TOYS THAT LISTEN AND LEARN

When a toy uses AI, it collects data such as voice recordings, interactions, and background sounds. This information is sent to remote servers, where it is analysed to improve responses. Your child's voice becomes training data, which may be stored indefinitely or shared with third parties.

WEAK SECURITY PROTECTIONS

Some AI toys have poor password protection or open network connections. Others may have microphones or cameras that stay on, even when the toy appears to be off. This can lead to recordings being made without your knowledge, including conversations unrelated to play.

ARTIFICIAL VOICES, REAL INFLUENCE

For very young children, an AI companion may become one of the first voices they interact with regularly. How that voice shows humour, empathy, or authority can shape how a child learns to communicate. If the model is artificial, then part of what is learned is artificial as well.

PRESSURE TO KEEP ENGAGING

Some toys reward repeated use or track engagement, encouraging children to interact more. When children compare how their toys perform, it creates pressure to play more often. This increases the amount of data collected and can make learning feel like competition.

MARKETING THROUGH PLAY

Toys that learn a child's preferences may feed that data into future advertising. A toy that knows a child's favourite colour or hobby could help a company design more targeted marketing to that child and their family.

PLAYTIME AS DATA TRAINING

The information collected from children helps train AI systems. Their voice, emotional responses, and behaviour shape how machines 'understand' people. Play becomes part of a much larger system that influences how future technologies behave.

Advice for Parents & Educators

START WITH A CONVERSATION

Talk to young people. Explain that some toys learn from what they say and do. Help them understand that even friendly technology should have boundaries, and to ask questions about it. Curiosity is healthy, blind trust is not.

SET LIMITS ON USE

Turn off Wi-Fi or Bluetooth when the toy is not in use. Check for updates regularly, as they can change privacy or safety settings. Treat connected toys like any smart device; they should be monitored, updated, and switched off when not in use.

MODEL DIGITAL AWARENESS

Children learn from adults. If they see you checking privacy settings, reading terms, and talking openly about online safety, they are more likely to do the same. Show them how to question technology in a healthy way.

RESEARCH BEFORE YOU BUY

Look for toys that work offline or store data locally. Check for a free or demo version so you can test how it behaves. Read privacy policies to understand what data is collected, where it goes, and whether it's shared with others.

REVIEW PRIVACY SETTINGS

Find out where the data is stored and who has access to it. Some companies sell or share data with advertisers. If the toy connects through an app, check what it requests access to and limit those permissions whenever possible.

BALANCE AI WITH REAL PLAY

AI toys can be fun and creative, but they are not a replacement for real human interaction. Encourage time away from technology with activities that foster emotional and social development. Use AI toys to support learning, not define it.

Meet Our Expert

Clara Hawking is Executive Director of Kompass Education. She advises governments, school trusts, and global organisations on AI governance and safeguarding, helping schools and families understand how technology shapes learning, wellbeing, and the digital future of children.



TERM DATES 2025-26

Monday 5th January 2026 – INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Spring Term: Tuesday 6th January 2026 – Friday 27th March 2026

Children return to school on Tuesday 6th January 2026

[Half term: Monday 16th February 2026 – Friday 20th February 2026]

School finishes on Friday 27th March 2026 at 1.00pm

[Easter Holidays Monday 30th March 2026 – Friday 10th April 2026]

Summer Term: Monday 13th April 2026 – Thursday 23rd July 2026

Children return to school on Monday 13th April 2026

Monday 4th May 2026 Bank Holiday SCHOOL CLOSED

Monday 25th May 2026 Bank Holiday SCHOOL CLOSED

[Half term: Monday 25th May 2026 – Friday 29th May 2026]

Monday 1st June 2026 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Children return to school on Tuesday 2nd June 2026

Friday 3rd July 2026 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

School finishes on Thursday 23rd July 2026 at 1.00pm

2025 / 26 School Calendar

September '25						
M	T	W	T	F	S	S
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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October '25						
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November '25						
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December '25						
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January '26						
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February '26						
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March '26						
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April '26						
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May '26						
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June '26						
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July '26						
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August '26						
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31						

- = Term Time
- = 24/25 Pupil Holidays
- = Bank and Public Holidays
- = 2025/26 Pupil Holidays
- = Inset Day - school closed to pupils
- = Occasional Day - (school closed to pupils)

TERM DATES 2026-2027

Tuesday 1st September 2026 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Autumn Term: Wednesday 2nd September 2026 – Friday 18th December 2026

Children return to school on Wednesday 2nd September

[Half Term: Monday 26th October 2026 - Friday 30th October 2026]

Monday 2nd November 2026 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Friday 4th December 2026 Occasional Day SCHOOL CLOSED

School finishes on Friday 18th December 2026 at 1.00pm

[Christmas Holidays: Monday 21st December 2026 – Friday 1st January 2027]

Monday 4th January 2027 – INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Spring Term: Tuesday 5th January 2027 – Thursday 25th March 2027

Children return to school on Tuesday 5th January 2027

[Half term: Monday 15th February 2027 – Friday 19th February 2027]

School finishes on Thursday 25th March 2027 at 1.00pm

[Easter Holidays Friday 26th March 2027 – Friday 9th April 2027]

Summer Term: Monday 12th April 2027 – Thursday 22nd July 2027

Children return to school on Monday 12th April 2027

Monday 3rd May 2027 Bank Holiday SCHOOL CLOSED

Monday 31st May 2027 Bank Holiday SCHOOL CLOSED

[Half term: Monday 31st May 2027 – Friday 4th June 2027]

Monday 7th June 2027 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

Children return to school on Tuesday 8th June 2027

Friday 2nd July 2027 INSET Day SCHOOL CLOSED

School finishes on Thursday 22nd July 2027 at 1.00pm

2026 / 27 School Calendar

September '26						
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October '26						
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November '26						
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December '26						
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January '27						
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February '27						
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March '27						
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April '27						
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May '27						
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June '27						
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July '27						
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August '27						
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30	31					

- = Term Time
- = 2025/26 Pupil Holidays
- = Bank and Public Holidays
- = 2026/27 Pupil Holidays
- = Inset Day - school closed to pupils
- = Occasional Day - school closed to pupils

