

NEWSLETTER

Term 1 2026



Our Cover Stars:

Our FAWever Choir recording their latest video

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N.E.S.T and E.N.G.A.G.E.
Class Updates

Dates for your diary:

Monday 2nd November - First day of term 2

Monday 9th November - Parent Consultations

Friday 13th November - Children in Need

Saturday 28th November - FAW Magical Grotto

Wednesday 9th December - Winter Fairs

Wednesday 16th December - Christmas dinner

*Thursday 17th December - Class Christmas parties
and Christmas clothes day*

Friday 18th December - Last day of term

Loose Boughton Lane, Maidstone, Kent ME15 9QF Telephone: 01622 743925

Snodland The Wolfe Building, Malling Road, Snodland ME6 5HS Telephone: 01634 566890

Oxford Road 29 Oxford Road, Maidstone, ME15 8DF Telephone: 01622 392205

WORLDS BEST SCHOOL PRIZE AND NEW SINGLE RELEASE

Can we be worlds best and top of the charts?

On 19 November, Five Acre Wood School will discover whether it has been named the World's Best School for Innovation 2026. Whatever the outcome, one thing is certain: we have plenty to celebrate – and a brand-new FAWever Choir single to help us do it!

It has been an extraordinary year for Five Acre Wood School. In June, we were named among the Top 10 schools in the world for the World's Best School Prize for Innovation, placing us alongside some of the most inspiring educational organisations from across the globe. This international recognition celebrates the difference we make by challenging expectations, removing barriers and creating ambitious opportunities for our pupils. From the FAWrient Express and Platform FAW to our radio station, Peggy's FAWtique and our other learning environments, we continue to demonstrate that, with the right opportunities, our young people can achieve amazing things.

We will discover whether we have won the Innovation Prize next term. Naturally, we are keeping everything crossed! But regardless of the result, being recognised is an incredible achievement and a testament to the ambition, creativity and dedication of our entire school community.

And what better way to celebrate than with music?



On 12 October, the FAWever Choir returned to the recording studio to work on their next single – and, with 49 pupils taking part, it was our biggest choir group ever! From recording vocals at The Vine Church to capturing some incredible, high-energy footage at GRAVITY Trampoline Park in Maidstone, it was a day full of enthusiasm and unforgettable moments. The production team also returned to FAW to film our pupils enjoying rebound therapy towards the end of term.

We cannot reveal too much just yet, but our latest release is a joyful anthem about ambition, self-belief and refusing to put limits on what you can achieve. Sound familiar? It captures the very heart of the FAW Way and the belief that runs through everything we do: that every young person deserves the opportunity to discover their potential and achieve new possibles.

We must thank our remarkable pupils, as well as Kevin Thorpe, Mark Doggett and Lee Rose at DeeVu Records, The Vine Church and GRAVITY for their help in the recording of the video.

The release of our new single, through FAW Records, is scheduled for 19 November – the very same day we discover the outcome of the Innovation Prize! Could it be a double celebration?

In the meantime, there is still a way you can help us celebrate our achievement. The public vote for the World's Best School Prizes Community Choice Award closes on 29 October. This is a separate award, decided by public votes rather than the judging panel, and every vote helps show the world how much our school community believes in what we do.

Whether or not we take home the prize, we already have something truly special to be proud of: a school community that believes in possibilities, challenges expectations and never stops asking, "What more can we achieve?" And that is certainly worth singing about!

OUTDOOR LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (OLE)

Changes and growth for our outdoor curriculum

Edison class has begun to transform our former staff garden into a new outdoor learning space being created by our pupils, for our pupils.

With support from our wonderful volunteer Karen Filmer, students are helping to create a space full of opportunities to explore and learn about the natural world. They have already started planning and stripping out the garden in preparation for filling in a pond, removing seating and creating soakaways, working with minimal support and showing independent work skills. The finished garden will include a pond and dipping deck, waterfall, stream, flower beds and wildlife habitats, providing a home for wildlife and a fantastic new learning environment.

The garden will become part of our OLE curriculum, giving pupils the opportunity to go pond dipping, monitor wildlife, explore their senses and learn about biodiversity and conservation. Accessibility and inclusion are central to the garden's design, helping as many pupils as possible to enjoy and learn from the space.



To find a name for the new garden, we ran a whole school competition. Classes learnt about what an ecology garden is and came up with their own suggestions. Edison class then shortlisted their favourite names before the whole school voted for the winner: FAWever Wild!

We are currently looking for donations of materials to bring the project to life including items such as wildlife boxes/houses and feeders, pond equipment, plants and compost, seeds and turf, garden structures such as paving and fencing and pots and baskets. If you know anyone who could donate any of these items, please get in touch.

We cannot wait to see the FAWever Wild garden develop and, most importantly, watch our pupils take ownership of it and help it grow.

Costa Volunteering

Earlier this term, Costa Coffee volunteers joined us for a two-day project. The visit began with a tour of the school, allowing our volunteers to see some of the environments and opportunities we provide for our pupils before getting stuck into the practical work. The focus was FAWpaws, our therapeutic animal area, which provides a calm environment where pupils can stroke, groom and feed the animals, as well as walk our goats.



The space currently houses eight guinea pigs in 'The Village' and includes a separate paddock for our goats. The volunteers worked hard to improve and transform the area, building a new shelter for our goats and visiting ponies, a perimeter fence, and painting a new chalkboard noticeboard, and benches.

A huge thank you to everyone from Costa who gave their time, energy and enthusiasm to the project. We would also like to extend a special thank you to Glen from Challenge Fencing Ltd, who personally delivered the materials to the school to support the project.

The new shelter has been providing pupils with a lovely space, providing interactive experiences and opportunities in a calm and nurturing environment.

PEGGY'S FAWTIQUE

Part of our Preparing for Adulthood Hub

Opened last academic year, our school shop, Peggy's FAWtique, provides pupils with an authentic retail environment where they can develop a wide range of skills, from customer service and sales to handling money, decision-making, problem-solving and visual merchandising.



As part of our Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) Hub, the shop sits alongside our FAWrient Express café, Platform FAW Roastery and Art of FAW workshop. These facilities bring genuine working environments into school, helping pupils develop skills and confidence that can support them as they prepare for future work experience and employment opportunities.

The benefits of Peggy's FAWtique extend beyond the pupils who work in the shop. It gives pupils from across the school the opportunity to experience a real-life retail environment – browsing, choosing products, handling money and interacting with others. These everyday experiences help bring learning to life, supporting pupils to develop an understanding of concepts such as value, budgeting, communication and making choices. It is also used by our Occupational Therapists who bring pupils

along for shopping practice before trips off site.

Liz, our PfA Lead, spends a lot of time in the shop and sees first-hand how pupils are making the most of this space. One regular visitor is George from Applegate class, who pops in most weeks to browse carefully and choose something special to buy. George is a thoughtful shopper who takes his time considering what he would like and what he can afford. Sometimes he chooses a treat for his dog; other times, he picks out a candle for Mum. One thing is certain, though – he cannot resist an ice cream! It is lovely to see how much George enjoys the experience and how he often thinks of his family when choosing what to buy.



Class visits also provide valuable opportunities to practise moving between environments, making choices and developing independence. During a recent visit, pupils from Skippy class chose between stretchy dinosaurs, balls and bubbles, with bubbles proving to be the clear favourite! These visits encourage pupils to make their own decisions, interact with their peers and enjoy the experience of shopping in a real-life setting. A trip to the shop becomes much more than buying something – it is an opportunity to build confidence, exercise independence and feel part of a wider community.



Located on a shared site and within a residential community, the shop also has the potential to bring pupils into contact with people beyond the school environment. These interactions can provide opportunities to practise communication and customer service skills in a meaningful, everyday setting.

Peggy's FAWtique sells a range of products including clothing, gifts, practical items, coffee from Platform FAW Roastery and ice creams, with items made by our pupils appearing soon. Pupils wishing to buy items can bring money into school where class has arranged a visit. Alternatively, you can send an email to lmajor@five-acre.kent.sch.uk. We look forward to welcoming more classes to the shop and seeing pupils continue to develop their skills, confidence and independence.

School Reunion Disco Brings Former Pupils Together

On 3 October, we were delighted to host a school reunion at our Loose site for former FAW pupils, and what a fantastic evening it was!

More than 70 former pupils attended, representing a wide range of year groups. It was wonderful to see so many familiar faces return, with our oldest attendee now aged 38. The event provided a brilliant opportunity to reconnect, share memories and celebrate the journeys our former pupils have taken since leaving FAW.



The evening was filled with fun and entertainment, including a lively disco with a DJ, kindly provided by a staff member's husband. Guests also enjoyed a delicious buffet prepared by Grow 19, which proved a big hit.

One of the highlights was hearing about our former pupils' achievements. Many shared updates on their lives, including employment opportunities, volunteering roles and personal accomplishments. We were particularly impressed to hear that one former pupil had recently raised an incredible £7,000 for charity.

The dance floor stayed busy throughout the night as guests enjoyed dancing, singing, eating, drinking, catching up with old friends, and making new ones. The atmosphere was warm, welcoming, and full of laughter, with everyone clearly enjoying the chance to be together again.

The reunion was a tremendous success and a wonderful reminder of the strong connections that continue long after pupils leave FAW. We would like to thank everyone who attended, as well as those who helped organise and support the event. We look forward to welcoming everyone back for future reunions.

Coffee Morning at Oxford Road



On Friday 25 September, Oxford Road held a coffee morning to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support and give parents and carers the opportunity to explore the School's new expansion.

Families were given a tour of the new facilities, which include a bedroom where pupils can learn practical skills such as making a bed, a dining room and kitchen, new classrooms and a staff breakout space.

Thanks to your generous donations, we raised £50 for Macmillan. A big thank you to everyone who supported the event, and especially to our students for helping out and counting the donations!

Students have also been helping to keep the site clean and tidy as part of their learning. They chose jobs to complete around the site, including weeding and sweeping the car park, giving our hardworking Facilities Team the opportunity to take a well-earned break!



Family Support Team Coffee Morning

Towards the end of this term, our Family Support Team hosted a coffee morning, giving parents and carers the opportunity to meet one another, chat with staff from across the school, ask questions and enjoy some refreshments together.

Thank you to everyone who attended. We hope you found it helpful and enjoyed the opportunity to connect with other families and staff.

Our Family Support Team are non-classroom-based staff who provide a range of support and information to parents and carers. This can include preparing resources to use at home, helping with applications to external agencies and services, looking into concerns raised by families, and providing a safe space to talk openly. The team also works alongside external agencies and professionals to help ensure families receive the support they need. You can contact the team at: team@five-acre.kent.sch.uk.

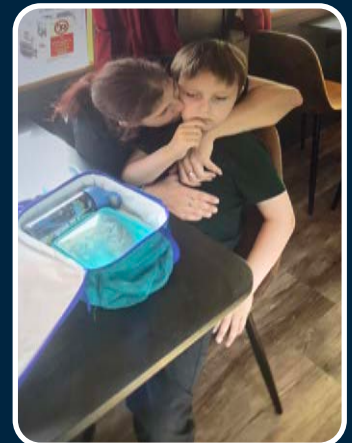


Stay and Plays

It has been wonderful to welcome families into School for our coffee mornings and tailored Stay and Play sessions this term.

Classes made use of a variety of spaces and activities to encourage interaction between families and staff. Our E.N.G.A.G.E. Approach classes met at the FAWrient Express, enjoying tasty treats and exploring the train carriage, while our N.E.S.T. Learning Approach classes created a pumpkin and potions-themed Stay and Play in the O.L.E. Other classes held coffee mornings, and some parents even had

the opportunity to experience a fire drill during their visit!



These opportunities are valuable for both children and their families. They allow parents and carers to spend time with their children in the school environment, connect with other families and get to know our staff. Most importantly, they help strengthen the partnership between home and school, supporting each child's learning and development.



N.E.S.T. Pumpkins & Potions Stay and Play



This term, N.E.S.T. held its very first Pumpkins & Potions Stay and Play event, and what a fantastic success it was!

We were delighted to welcome so many families who joined us for a day filled with fun, laughter, sensory exploration and plenty of autumnal magic. It was wonderful to see pupils, parents, carers and staff coming together, enjoying the activities and making special memories. The event also provided a lovely opportunity for families to meet and connect with other parents, while pupils enjoyed exploring, interacting and sharing experiences with children from across N.E.S.T.



There was plenty on offer throughout the day. Pumpkin painting proved extremely popular, with pupils getting creative decorating their very own pumpkins. Apple bobbing was another huge hit, bringing lots of excitement, laughter and a few wet sleeves.

Our spooky bat cave was enjoyed by all, but one of the biggest highlights had to be the fog machine. Pupils eagerly waited in anticipation for the fog to appear, with lots of excitement, smiles and laughter when it finally filled the space. It was wonderful to see so many pupils

engaging with the different sensory experiences in their own individual ways.

A very special thank you to Mollie from Hedwig class, who kindly liaised with a local farmer to arrange the supply of pumpkins for our event. Thanks to her efforts, every pupil had the opportunity to decorate their own pumpkin and take it home as a special reminder of the day. We would also like to extend our thanks to Mollie's family members, who helped make this possible.

We would also like to say a huge thank you to our Outdoor Learning Environment (OLE) team for allowing us to use the wonderful outdoor space and for all their help and support throughout the event.



Finally, a big thank you to all our N.E.S.T. staff for their support throughout the day, helping pupils to access, engage with and participate in the different activities, ensuring everyone could enjoy the experience. Thank you also to all the families who joined us and helped make our first Pumpkins & Potions event such a memorable occasion.

Events like these are a wonderful reminder of what N.E.S.T. is all about – Nurturing, Engaging, Supporting and Thriving together.





Functional Skills: Cafes and Restaurants

Students have successfully completed their first Functional Skills topic of Term 1, which focused on Cafés and Restaurants. Throughout the topic, students developed a wide range of literacy and numeracy skills, culminating in planning and organising a meal out at Wetherspoon's in Maidstone, either at The Muggleton Inn or The Society Rooms.



Students worked hard to prepare for their visit, including making bookings, budgeting, and developing the communication and social skills needed for eating out in the community. They also used their learning to get public transport to Maidstone town centre, then navigated themselves to the venue for lunch. The topic concluded with a celebratory lunch, where students were able to put their learning into practice, choose what they wanted to eat, not just for themselves but for the parents that were able to attend, and demonstrate their growing independence and confidence.

They also used their ICT skills to review and evaluate their experience afterwards. Overall, the project was a great success and a fantastic achievement for all involved.



Golding Homes Time Capsule Event



Several classes from Oxford Road recently took part in Golding Homes' celebratory Time Capsule Event.

Students explored creative ways to represent themselves by producing self-portraits through drawing, creating avatars, or selecting photographs. Each piece was personalised and decorated with images representing their interests, favourite things, and individual personalities, capturing who they are today and preserving this moment in time for the future.

Students also had the opportunity to meet and communicate with a range of distinguished guests, including local councillors, the Mayor of Maidstone, and representatives from Golding Homes and Skillcrown Property Developers. Their artwork has now been placed in the time capsule, allowing them to play a small but meaningful part in local history as part of Phase 1 of the Shepway Regeneration Project.



Tuck Shops

Tuck shops provide a fantastic, hands-on learning opportunity for pupils, helping them develop valuable life skills in a fun and meaningful way. From practising money and numeracy skills to developing communication, social interaction, teamwork and independence, every tuck shop visit offers an opportunity to learn, grow and build confidence.

Something as simple as buying a snack can become a valuable learning experience. Pupils take an active role in setting up the shop, serving customers, handling payments and making decisions. They also have opportunities to interact with peers and adults they may not usually meet, helping them build confidence, develop communication skills and form positive relationships.

At Snodland, money raised through the tuck shop helps fund reward afternoons and trips. During Terms 2, 4 and 6, it also contributes towards class parties and end-of-year trips, giving pupils even more to look forward to!

And there's more exciting news! From next term, the Snodland Tuck Shop will be open on Wednesdays as well as Fridays, meaning even more opportunities to practise valuable life skills – and enjoy a few extra treats!



Splish Splash Dash Event

Back in September, we hosted our very first Splish Splash



Dash event, a fun-filled water play day raising money for MindFAWL, a mobile play therapy bus. Children enjoyed the opportunity to play and explore in a familiar environment, while parents and carers welcomed the chance to spend quality time playing alongside their children. Activities included water painting, bubbles, a water trail and plenty of sensory play. Towels and spare clothes were definitely needed!



Thank you to everyone who came along. We hope you had as much fun as we did! A big thank you also goes to our Emotional Wellbeing Team for organising and running the event.

Funds raised will support a mobile play therapy project that aims to reach more pupils and families and provide therapeutic support to those who might otherwise face barriers to accessing these services.



Inspiring Visit to Nucleus Arts Centre



A group of Year 10 and Year 11 pupils enjoyed a visit to Nucleus Arts Centre in Chatham this term.

During the trip, pupils explored a captivating fantasy exhibition featuring artwork by acclaimed artist Nick Ashton and several emerging young artists he is currently mentoring.

Nick spoke to the group about his career in the creative industries, sharing insights into some of the exciting projects he has worked on, including Harry Potter and Star Wars. His experiences gave pupils a valuable insight into the opportunities available within the arts sector.

Nick also generously offered advice and feedback to one of our budding artists, who is passionate about developing her skills and hopes to pursue a career in art. What a fantastic opportunity!

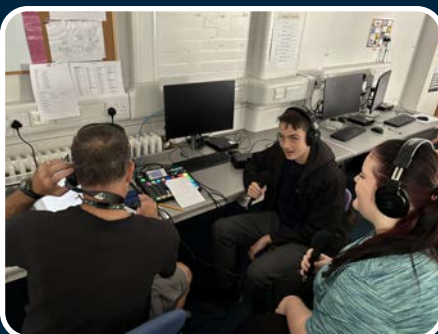
Radio FAW All

It has been a busy term for Paul and Clive at Maidstone Radio FAW All, with lots happening both in the studio and out in the community.

They have welcomed four new volunteer presenters to the team, including two of our staff members, while continuing to look for more volunteers – no experience is necessary as training and support are provided. They have also been developing new partnerships with local organisations, including Age UK (discussing a joint project involving their clients and pupils from FAW), and have been working with community groups including Kenward Trust, Andy's Man Club, Grow 19 and Maidstone Skylarks.

Pupils have also been getting involved, with the radio team supporting Twain Class with their BTEC Digital Media studies and after the half term break, work placement students will be back in the studio to develop their skills in terms of communication and social interaction as well as assisting with studio tasks such as editing, jingle production and presenting.

They have been demonstrating the 'live' remote studio at community events including at Kenward House and Bluewater shopping centre. They also used the remote recording facility at the Snodland site to allow the students to produce their own radio show and they are working with Grow 19 in the production of their very own Halloween Show.



The radio was also pleased to receive a donation of £350 from DVM Global Ltd (construction company) some of which has already gone towards the purchase of a new USB microphone for classroom use. A huge thank you to them.





Big Mental Health Conversation

Seven students from F.O.C.U.S. secondary had the amazing opportunity to attend the Big Mental Health Conversation on the 7th October. This event is lead by Young Leaders from the Kent Youth County Council and focuses on bringing together young people (13-16) along with school staff, mental health services, and community partners to talk openly about mental health, share experiences, and shape future support.



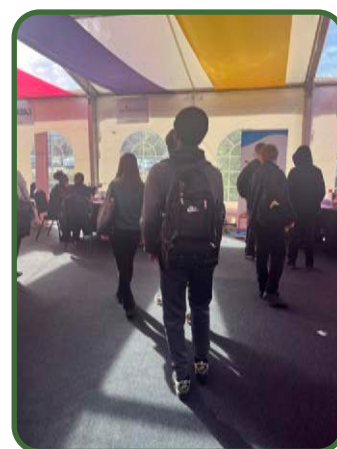
The students had an amazing day filled with some great discussions around mental health. They took part in activities in the marketplace where stallholders educated them about the services available and how to access them. They enjoyed interactive workshops alongside other schools and got to meet therapy animals: dogs and snakes. After lunch, they enjoyed listening to the panel of experts and young people respond to questions asked by the audience in the morning. A thoroughly great day with some great conversations.

Students Explore Future Opportunities at Job Fair

A group of students recently visited Bluewater's annual Job Fair to explore potential career paths and think about their aspirations for the future.

The event was incredibly popular, with students showing fantastic patience and resilience as they waited over an hour to enter. Despite the unexpected queues, they remained positive and made the most of the experience, enjoying some great conversations about their interests, ambitions and what they hope to achieve in the future.

Although the day did not quite go to plan, it provided valuable opportunities for students to develop their social skills, reflect on their aspirations and build relationships along the way.



We are incredibly proud of their positivity, resilience and enthusiasm throughout the day!

Secondary V.I.E.W. Art Gallery

Our V.I.E.W. pupils hosted their fourth annual Art Gallery during the last week of term, showcasing a wonderful collection of artwork created throughout the term.

As part of their learning, pupils explored the work of different artists and experimented with a range of styles and techniques to create their own masterpieces. They also designed invitations for the event, giving them another opportunity to express their creativity. A special congratulations to Kieran and Dexter, whose invitation designs were selected as the winning entries!

Thank you to everyone who visited our pop-up gallery in the field and helped make the event such a success.



MAXIMISING SUPPORT FOR OUR PUPILS

Understanding Pupil Premium

At Five Acre Wood School, we are deeply committed to ensuring that every child has the equipment, resources and opportunities they need to thrive. One of the most effective ways we achieve this is through the government's Pupil Premium funding scheme.

Pupil Premium is additional funding provided to schools to help close the attainment gap for disadvantaged children and support their extra-curricular development.

We link our Pupil Premium Action Plan with the school's strategic planning to ensure that supporting disadvantage children is a core, shared mission rather than an isolated, separate task.

Who qualifies for this funding?

Schools receive extra money for each pupil who fits specific criteria:.

Free School Meals (FSM): Pupils currently eligible for FSM, or who have been eligible at any point in the past 6 years (known as "Ever 6 FSM"). Registering for Free School Meals can unlock thousands of pounds in extra funding for our school.

Many families are eligible without realising it. Your child may be eligible if you receive any of the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Income Support
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Child Tax Credit (under specific income thresholds)

Looked-after and Previously Looked-after Children: Children in local authority care or adopted from state care.

Service Children: Pupils with a parent in the regular armed forces, or who have been registered as a service child in the past 6 years (Service Pupil Premium).

How do we use this funding?

The money is not a personal budget and does not go directly to individual children, and schools do not have to spend it solely on the specific child who triggered the funding.

Schools use guidelines from the Education Endowment Foundation to invest in high-quality teaching, targeted academic tutoring, and removing non-academic barriers like poor attendance, cultural capital or mental health challenges.

Schools must publish their annual Pupil Premium strategy on their website so parents and regulators can see how the funds are used.

How can you help?

Even if your child does not require extra academic help, registering for Pupil Premium ensures our school receives the maximum financial support possible to invest in whole-school resources. If you believe your child may be eligible—or if your financial circumstances have recently changed—please contact us, or check the Department for Education guidance for more information on how to apply. Every application makes a difference to our school community.

Registering is completely confidential and brings immediate advantages. Eligible children frequently receive help with the costs of school uniforms, free entry to after-school clubs and funding towards school trips. Simultaneously, it provides the school with vital funds to hire specialised staff and purchase essential learning equipment.

FAWfilling Futures

It has been another exciting term for fundraising at Five Acre Wood. We are so grateful to everyone who continues to support our school and pupils. Every donation, fundraising effort and partnership helps FAWfilling Futures create more opportunities, enhance learning, and bring exciting projects to life. Here's a little look at what we have been up to this term and the difference your support is making.

A Splash of Colour at Woodstock Festival 2026!

Woodstock Festival 2026 was filled with colour, laughter and excitement as some of our pupils took part in a specially designed inclusive colour assault course! Rather than a traditional colour run, our team created an accessible course packed with bright colours, sensory experiences, movement and, most importantly, lots of fun!

It was wonderful to see pupils enjoying the experience in their own individual ways. Some could not wait to get stuck into the colourful, messy activities, while others preferred to watch at first before gradually building the confidence to join in.

The activity was a fantastic example of how a little creativity, thoughtful planning and a few adaptations can make exciting experiences accessible to pupils with a wide range of needs and abilities. Seeing the smiles, laughter, growing confidence and sense of achievement made this a truly memorable part of Woodstock Festival 2026.



Bluewater Charity Day

We had a fantastic day at Bluewater, raising awareness of FAWfilling Futures and sharing the wonderful work happening at Five Acre Wood School. It was a brilliant opportunity to meet shoppers, showcase some of our exciting projects and help more people discover how they can support our pupils. We are looking forward to going back in March next year!

Charities Connect

At the end of September, we had the pleasure of holding our second Charities Connect event and this time it was at the beautiful Kenward House in Yalding. It was a wonderful opportunity to bring local charities together, meet new people, share ideas, and explore how we can support one another to make a difference in our communities. A huge thank you to everyone who helped make the event so welcoming, particularly Penny and Louise at Kenward Trust for hosting us.

Donate
Today

Amazon Wish List: Did you know that you can support our pupils by purchasing items from our Amazon Wish Lists, which are tailored to our different learning approaches across the school? Every donation helps provide valuable resources and enriching experiences that make a real difference to our pupils' learning and development. You can view our wish lists here: www.fawfillingfutures.co.uk

Move A Million Kilos Challenge

We are absolutely thrilled to announce that we smashed our Move a Million Challenge, lifting an amazing 1,136,231kg with over two hours still left to go!



It was a fantastic day filled with fun, laughter, determination and wonderful teamwork. A huge well done to all our amazing pupils who took part and gave it their all. We could not be prouder of you!

A very special thank you to The Core Gym Maidstone, who not only hosted the event but also got fully involved in the challenge, lifting an incredible amount of weight and making a huge contribution towards reaching our target. Your enthusiasm, generosity and support helped make the day such an amazing success, and we are incredibly grateful!



A massive thank you also to everyone who participated, supported the event or generously sponsored our challenge. Your kindness and encouragement helped make the day such a brilliant success. Our fundraising total is currently

sitting at just under £2,000, which is absolutely fantastic!



Well done, Team Five Acre Wood and The Core Gym Maidstone — what an achievement! You can support this fundraiser here: [Fundraising group - Move a Million Kilos](#)

The Core@FAW Project Update

A huge thank you to every individual, group and business who has supported The Core@FAW so far. We are delighted to share that we have officially been given the go-ahead for Phase 1, which will see the inside of our shipping containers transformed as the first step towards creating our specialist, accessible gym for our pupils and the wider community. As the work is taking place off-site, we will soon be visiting to see the progress for ourselves, which is incredibly exciting. We are keeping photos under wraps for now but cannot wait to share more with you soon.

Phase 2 will focus on purchasing the gym equipment, and we would love to hear from anyone interested in sponsoring a piece of equipment. If you, your business, or someone you know would like to get involved, please get in touch with the team. Together, we are making this exciting vision a reality.



Individual Fundraising

A massive congratulations and heartfelt thank you to **Thomas**, who completed an incredible 36 mile Ultra challenge in just 9 hours and 46 minutes. What a phenomenal achievement and a true testament to his determination, strength and dedication. Not only did Thomas take on this huge challenge, but he also raised an incredible £2,182.50 for us along the way!

We are incredibly grateful for his kindness, generosity and support, and could not be prouder of his amazing efforts. From everyone here, thank you and well done Thomas!



After such an achievement, Thomas certainly deserves a well-earned rest – although rumour has it he may already have his sights set on the 7 Valleys challenge next year.



Someone else who is taking on a huge challenge is **Sarah**, one of our wonderful FAWfilling Futures trustees and parents. She is taking on the Conqueror Challenge Amazon Rainforest Challenge – an incredible 1,000 miles!

Aiming to finish by Valentine's Day 2027, Sarah plans to walk at least 15,000 steps a day, an especially impressive challenge following a total hip replacement just over a year ago.

Sarah, who has been part of the Five Acre Wood family since 2013, is raising vital funds for our Acorn Fund, helping provide memorable experiences and opportunities for our pupils.

Thank you, Sarah, for your amazing dedication and support. We will be cheering you on every step of the way! Sarah is still raising funds and you can sponsor her here:

<https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/fundraising/steps-for-five-acre-wood-school>

A heartfelt thank you to one of our wonderful grandparents, **Mair**, who took on the Kent Ultra 10K Walk on 11th October 2026, raising funds for their OUR school.

Having funded their own place, they set out to raise £500 towards the development of The Core@FAW, our planned onsite gym that will benefit pupils and the wider community – she actually raised a fantastic £922.50.

We are incredibly grateful for this fantastic show of kindness, determination and support.

Thank you for going the extra mile for Five Acre Wood and helping make a difference to our pupils!



Flying High for Core@FAW



A huge congratulations to our incredible staff members, Sally and Laura, who bravely took to the skies at Headcorn Aerodrome to complete a thrilling Wing Walk in support of our Core@FAW gym project.

Strapped securely to the top wing of a biplane, Sally and Laura showed tremendous courage and determination

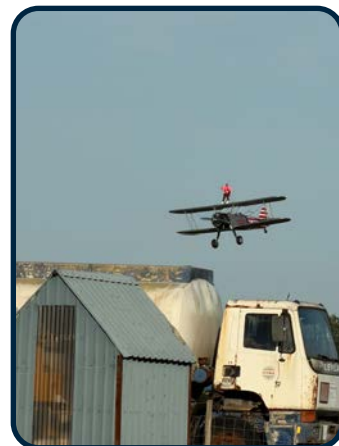
as they soared through the skies, taking fundraising to a whole new level.

Their amazing efforts have already raised just over £6,400. We are so proud of their achievement and hugely grateful to everyone who has supported them.



There is still time to help them reach their goal of £6,500. Every donation, big or small, will make a difference in helping us turn our vision for the Core@FAW gym into a reality. You can support them here:

<https://www.peoplesfundraising.com/fundraising/taking-fundraising-to-new-heights>



Thank you to Sally, Laura and everyone taking part in these fantastic fundraising initiatives. Your enthusiasm, generosity and commitment are helping us get one step closer to making Core@FAW a reality. Together, we are going the extra mile – and even taking to the skies – to make it happen!

Christmas Raffle

We are busy planning our Christmas Raffle and would love your help to make it a success.

We know that many of our parents and carers work for, or have connections with, some fantastic businesses and organisations, and we are hoping that some of these companies may be willing to support our fundraising efforts.



Does your employer offer charitable donations, community support, or raffle prizes?

We would be extremely grateful for any donations such as gift vouchers, hampers or gifts, tickets or activities, and products or services. No donation is too big or too small, and every contribution really does make a difference. The money raised will help our charity continue to provide those wonderful extras that enhance our pupils learning and broaden their experiences.

Finally, a huge thank you to everyone who has supported us this term – we could not do it without you! If you would like to get involved, support one of our projects or explore working with us, we would love to hear from you. To find out more about FAWfilling Futures and how you can help, please visit our website or get in touch.

The Fundraising Team

N.E.S.T. Learning Approach

Nurturing • Engaging • Supporting • Thriving

We have a wonderful range of themes planned for this year that will spark curiosity, inspire imagination and encourage our children to explore the world around them. Throughout the year, our learning will be brought to life through sensory experiences, hands-on exploration, outdoor adventures and play. We will continue to follow children's interests, celebrate their achievements and provide opportunities for every child to learn, communicate and develop at their own pace.

Term 1 – Getting to Know You

This term we have been building relationships and discovering what makes each child unique! Through favourite characters, animation, sensory play and autumn celebrations, we explored the children's likes, interests and motivators.

As the seasons changed, we enjoyed the colours, sounds and textures, with plenty of opportunities to explore the outdoors, develop friendships and settle into our environments.

We also hosted our Stay and Play, inviting families to join us for some magical autumn fun! From pumpkin exploration to bubbling potions and exciting sensory activities, it was a wonderful opportunity to explore, play and make memories.

Term 2 – Seasonal Sparks

A term full of sparkle and celebration, enjoying fireworks and bonfire-inspired sensory experiences, and discovering the excitement of Christmas.

The children will have opportunities to explore lights, colours, sounds and different celebrations through creative and sensory activities.

We will also be looking forward to our Christmas Stay and Play, for families to join us and share some festive experiences together!

Term 3 – Infinity and Beyond

In term 3 we will be exploring planets, stars, astronauts, rockets and the moon.

Through imaginative play, sensory exploration and exciting investigations, children will have opportunities to discover the wonders of space. We will be building rockets, exploring light and darkness, creating space-themed sensory experiences and encouraging our little explorers to investigate, experiment and discover!

Term 4 – In the Garden

As spring approaches, we will be heading outdoors to discover the wonderful world of gardens and growing!

Children will explore planting seeds, caring for plants and discovering the tiny creatures that share our outdoor spaces. From wriggly worms and busy minibeasts to pond life and colourful flowers, this term will be full of hands-on opportunities to explore nature.

Our outdoor learning environments will provide lots of opportunities to develop curiosity, independence and an understanding of the world around us.

Term 5 – Under the Sea

This term, we will be diving into an underwater adventure! We will discover sea creatures, explore the seaside and enjoy imaginative adventures involving pirates and mermaids.

Through water play, sensory exploration, stories and creative activities, children will experience the sights, sounds and textures of the seaside and ocean.

There will be plenty of opportunities to splash, investigate, communicate and explore together!

Term 6 – Around the World

We will finish our year with the children having opportunities to discover different countries and cultures through music, food, clothing, stories and celebrations. Our classrooms will be filled with colourful, engaging experiences that encourage children to explore different traditions and ways of life.

Through sensory activities, imaginative play and shared experiences, we will celebrate the wonderful diversity of the world around us.

N.E.S.T. Class Updates

Babe Class



Babe class have had a fantastic first term with everyone settling in really well. Everyone has enjoyed exploring areas around the school, both indoors and outdoors, such as Saplings, the Soft Play areas and the Trim Trail!

Our favourite activities have included food exploration, music and dance sessions, and sensory play. We are looking forward to more fun next term!



Flipper Class

What a fantastic start to the year we have had in Flipper class! All our pupils have been settling into their new routines, building relationships with staff and friends, and exploring lots of exciting learning opportunities.

We have been busy exploring different textures, sounds and materials through sensory play, developing our communication and independence, and enjoying lots of hands-on learning. We have particularly loved our outdoor adventures, exploring the changing autumn weather, splashing in puddles and discovering the world around us.

Our sensory sessions, early literacy and number activities have provided lots of opportunities for curiosity, exploration and fun. We are so proud of all the little achievements, growing confidence and special moments we have shared.

We are looking forward to even more exciting adventures next term!



N.E.S.T. Class Updates

Marley Class

Marley Class have had a fantastic term and have settled beautifully into our daily routines! Everyone has enjoyed exploring our classroom and making the most of our wonderful outdoor area.

The sensory lights have been a firm favourite, sparking curiosity and providing lots of opportunities for exploration. The children have also loved exploring loose parts and engaging in our curiosity approach, discovering new things through play and hands-on experiences.

It has been lovely to see the children grow in confidence, explore their surroundings and enjoy their time together. We are so proud of how well everyone has settled and look forward to another exciting term of learning and discovery!

Koko Class

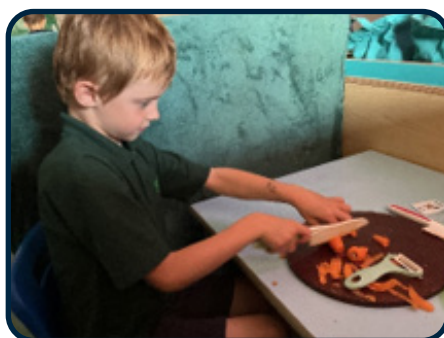
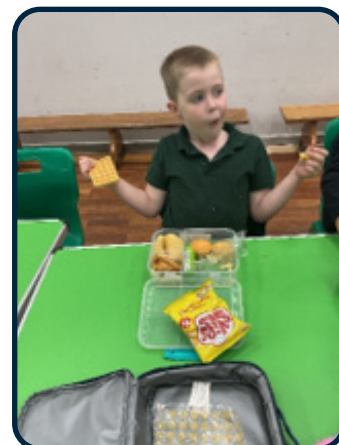
Koko class has had fantastic first term getting to know one another and developing our friendships. We have enjoyed exploring our classroom and the topic of autumn.



We have also enjoyed our outside time, exploring clay and making clay insects, hedgehogs and leaves over the term.

Putting our knife skills to the test, we have been cutting and peeling different foods both hard and soft.

Koko class have been eating lunch in the hall since September and have really enjoyed seeing other children from different classes. We are developing our independence requesting our pudding from the kitchen staff.



N.E.S.T. Class Updates

Hedwig Class

Our learning this term has focused on animation, Halloween and autumn, with lots of exciting sensory exploration and opportunities to discover the world around us.

The class has settled in beautifully, with lovely friendships blossoming and impressive cooperation developing during group activities and free play. It has been wonderful to see the children growing in confidence, sharing experiences and learning alongside one another.

In the classroom, the children have been making great progress with their TEACCH rotations, using visual aids to support their independence, understanding and engagement in learning.

It has been a joyful and productive term, filled with growth, discovery and lots of special moments. We are so proud of everything the children have achieved and look forward to more exciting learning adventures ahead!



Thula Class

Pupils have settled into their new classroom environment so well and are building positive relationships with the adults and their peers. We are so proud of how well everyone is getting to know their surroundings, exploring new experiences and becoming familiar with our daily routines.

This term, we have been exploring the season of autumn through a range of fun, hands-on and sensory activities. The children have had opportunities to investigate autumn colours, explore different natural materials and use their senses to discover the changes happening around them. We have loved seeing their curiosity, engagement and enjoyment as they explore and learn through play.

We look forward to sharing more of our N.E.S.T. adventures with you as the term continues!



N.E.S.T. Class Updates

Toto Class

The team have loved welcoming our new starters and helping everyone settle into their new classroom, meet their friends, and get to know the adults supporting them throughout the year.

We have enjoyed lots of fun and engaging activities, including visits to the FAWbulous Soft Play Bus, where the children can develop their physical skills in a stimulating environment. There have been lots of smiles and plenty of opportunities to build confidence and enjoy new experiences!

We have been exploring the changes that happen as autumn sets in. The children have been encouraged to investigate autumn colours, leaves and natural objects through sensory play and hands-on-activities, looking at the world around us and the different textures that we could find.

It has been wonderful to see the children beginning to build relationships and develop their independence and confidence as they settle into Toto class. We are so proud of them and look forward to another term filled with fun, learning, exploration and lots of happy memories together!

Skippy Class

This term, we have been very busy exploring and have enjoyed going on our first perimeter walk and discovering the environment around us. It has been wonderful to explore nature, investigate our surroundings and discover new things along the way.



We have also had lots of fun during our cooking activities. We enjoyed baking delicious banana bread, which we even got to make in the lodge! We also made muffin pizzas, which we were very excited to take home and share with our families.

One of our biggest achievements this term was taking our pennies to Peggy's Fawtique! We were able to choose from a selection of products to buy using the money provided by our parents and carers. We used our communication boards to request the items we wanted, before handing over our pennies and patiently

waiting for our change and receipt. We were so proud of everyone for taking part and practising these important communication, money-handling and independence skills.

We were also delighted to welcome Sarah Costain, Deputy Headteacher, who came down to watch and support us during this exciting experience.



E.N.G.A.G.E. Learning Approach

Engagement • Communication • Sensory • Independence

We have seven wonderful classes within our E.N.G.A.G.E. learning approach – McCartney, Sinatra, Sheeran, Collins, Ross, Swift and Styles – supported by Leanne (Assistant Head) and Sarah (Deputy Head).

Our learning is all about being active, exploratory and adventurous, giving pupils opportunities to develop their skills, build confidence and discover the world around them through meaningful, hands-on experiences. Our three key learning areas are Communication, Emotional and Sensory Regulation, and Independence, which underpin everything we do.

This term, we have been exploring different ways to communicate, using a combination of spoken language, signing, objects of reference, photographs and symbols. It has been fantastic to see pupils embracing these approaches and making great progress in expressing their needs, choices and preferences.

We have also been working hard on developing our independence and confidence during transitions and everyday activities. This has included eating lunch in the hall alongside peers from other classes, accessing a range of specialist resources across the school and developing our road safety skills. These experiences provide valuable opportunities to practise essential life skills, build relationships and become more confident in different environments.

We have loved welcoming families to our class coffee mornings on the FAWrient Express, giving us a chance to share experiences and celebrate our learning together. As the year progresses, we look forward to building on these achievements, exploring new places, trying new experiences and continuing to develop the skills that help our pupils thrive.

We are excited for the rest of our learning journey throughout the year, and look forward to the progress, achievements and memorable moments we get to make.

Ross Class

Ross class have had a busy and exciting term exploring 'Me and My Near Environment'! We have really enjoyed watching the children build relationships with their peers and the adults around them. They have all done amazingly well settling into their new classroom and routines, and it has been lovely to see their individual personalities beginning to shine through.

We also loved welcoming parents into the classroom for our Stay and Play session on the FAWrient Express. It was a lovely opportunity to share some of our experiences together.

Another exciting step this term has been beginning our transitions to the dinner hall. We are so proud of how the children are getting to know new spaces and experiences, gradually building their confidence and becoming more familiar with different parts of their school day.

It has been such a pleasure getting to know each child and seeing them grow in confidence, develop connections and discover more about their environment. We are looking forward to seeing what the next term brings for our wonderful class!

E.N.G.A.G.E. Class Updates**Collins Class**

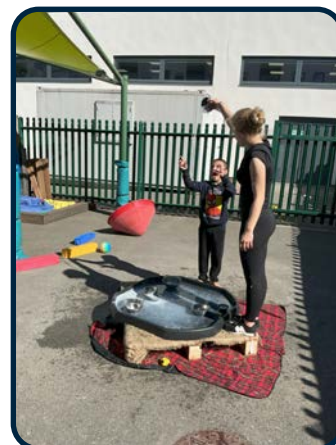
This term has been all about helping our boys settle happily into their new classroom, build positive relationships with friends and familiar adults, and develop a strong sense of belonging.

We have thoroughly enjoyed exploring our wider school community with regular visits to the Trim Trail, Sensory Garden, soft play area and FAWbulous Bus. These experiences have helped the boys grow in confidence by becoming more familiar with their surroundings and develop their curiosity about the world around them.

Our afternoon sessions have focused on Attention Autism, including Bucket Time and Stage 2 activities. The boys have explored a range of exciting sensory experiences, from foamy water play and messy sensory activities to hands-on exploration. These sessions have encouraged anticipation, sustained attention, communication and shared enjoyment, while providing many opportunities to make choices, express preferences and celebrate success together.

We were also delighted to welcome parents and carers to our Stay and Play session aboard the FAWrient Express, where families enjoyed sharing a snack together in our train carriage café. It was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate learning, strengthen home-school relationships and share special moments together.

Next term, our new topic, 'Sharing a Meal', will introduce exciting new experiences and further opportunities to develop communication, independence and social interaction skills. We are so proud of our boys and how they have settled into their classroom routines.



E.N.G.A.G.E. Class Updates**Swift Class**

In Swift class we like to be active when we learn. We have worked hard to develop our communication skills, which staff have helped us to do through motivating sensory activities. Some of our favourites this year have been painting, a bubble tower, dry tactile tray and using different resources with water. We have engaged well with practising road safety routines in the car park and are working towards doing this in the wider community, so that we can access places that we love.

Sinatra Class

This term, we have been exploring the topic 'Me and My Near Environment'. We have focused on helping the children settle into their new classrooms, build relationships with their peers and adults, and feel safe, secure and ready to learn.

We have enjoyed exploring different areas around the School, including the Trim Trail, soft play, Sensory Garden and Saplings, which the children have particularly enjoyed. We have also started transitioning to the dinner hall for lunch, helping the children become familiar with new routines and build their confidence.

We held our first Stay and Play session of the year, welcoming parents and carers onto the FAWrient Express to enjoy a snack with their child in our train carriage café. It was lovely to share this experience with our families.

The children have enjoyed a range of sensory activities this term and have especially loved getting messy! We have also been practising important life skills through practical activities such as washing up, cooking and handwashing, giving the children opportunities to develop their independence.

Next term, our topic will be 'Sharing a Meal'. The children will have opportunities to try new experiences, develop their independence and communication skills, and enjoy sharing activities together as a class.



We are really pleased with how the children in Sinatra class have settled into E.N.G.A.G.E. this term. It has been great to see them becoming more familiar with their surroundings, building relationships and grow in confidence. We look forward to continuing this progress next term!

McCartney Class

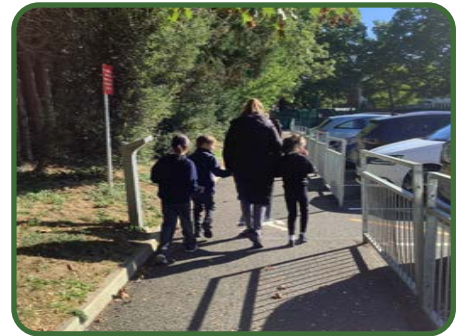
McCartney class have had a wonderful first term! We thoroughly enjoyed our visits to the FAWrient Express Train and Saplings. We have loved getting to know one another, building friendships and practising our transitions around the classroom and school environment. We are looking forward to another exciting term, with lots more learning, fun and opportunities to share meals together!



E.N.G.A.G.E. Class Updates**Sheeran Class**

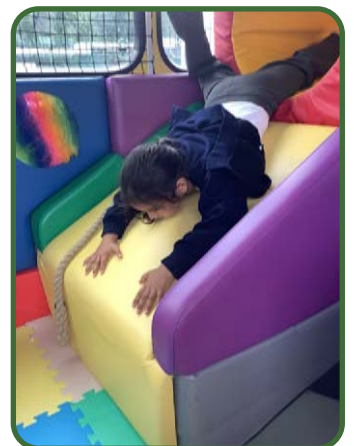
We have had a busy term exploring 'Me and My Near Environment'. We have focused on helping the children settle into their new classroom, build relationships with their peers and adults, and feel safe and ready to explore. Our E.N.G.A.G.E. Approach places regulation, communication and shared enjoyment at the heart of learning.

We have been getting to know our wider school community through perimeter walks, exploring the Trim Trail and visiting 7FAW7, our plane library. Transitioning to the dinner hall has also helped us build confidence with new routines. We also welcomed parents and carers to our Stay and Play on the FAWrient Express, sharing a snack together in our train carriage café!



Afternoon Bucket Time has brought colourful foam, stretchy slime and plenty of hands-on sensory fun! These experiences encourage curiosity, anticipation and communication, with lots of opportunities to share enjoyment and request more. We have also been busy practising washing up and handwashing through playful Life Skills activities.

Next term's topic, 'Sharing a Meal', will bring different life experiences and more opportunities to develop independence, communicate and enjoy being together. We are so proud of our children and their exciting first steps!



E.N.G.A.G.E. Class Updates

Sinatra Class

This term, we have been exploring the topic 'Me and My Near Environment'. We have focused on helping the children settle into their new classrooms, build relationships with their peers and adults, and feel safe, secure and ready to learn.

We have enjoyed exploring different areas around the School, including the Trim Trail, soft play, Sensory Garden and Saplings, which the children have particularly enjoyed. We have also started transitioning to the dinner hall for lunch, helping the children become familiar with new routines and build their confidence.

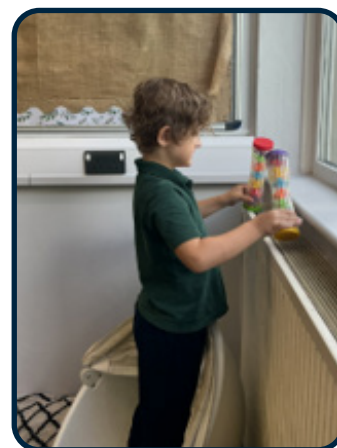
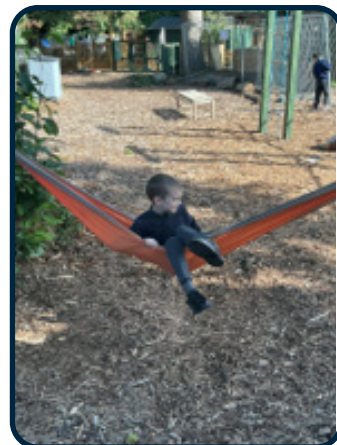
We held our first Stay and Play session of the year, welcoming parents and carers onto the FAWrient Express to enjoy a snack with their child in our train carriage café. It was lovely to share this experience with our families.

The children have enjoyed a range of sensory activities this term and have especially loved getting messy! We have also been practising important life skills through practical activities such as washing up, cooking and handwashing, giving the children opportunities to develop their independence.

Next term, our topic will be 'Sharing a Meal'. The children will have opportunities to try new experiences, develop their independence and communication skills, and enjoy sharing activities together as a class.



We are really pleased with how the children in Sinatra class have settled into E.N.G.A.G.E. this term. It has been great to see them becoming more familiar with their surroundings, building relationships and grow in confidence. We look forward to continuing this progress next term!



Styles Class

In Styles class we have worked hard on our communication, exploring use of objects of reference alongside other communication aids. We have enjoyed sensory work with scarves, paper and different tactile sensory resources. We have worked hard to develop our life skills, including using cutlery, accessing busier parts of the school and exploring different learning environments. Familiar routines and different sensory interventions have been helping us to feel calm and regulated and we have had positive feedback about how mature and calm we are when we transition around the school.

E.N.G.A.G.E. Class Updates

WE NEED YOU!

Can you help us share a meal?

Engage Approach • Five Acre Wood School

Term 2: Sharing a Meal

Do you, a family member or a friend have links to a local café, restaurant, food van or catering business?

We're looking for friendly people who could welcome a small group or visit us at school.



Order a snack • Prepare simple food • Share a meal

Help our children communicate, make choices and build confidence through real experiences.

Know someone who could help?

Please contact Charley and Leanne via your child's class teacher.

THANKS FOR READING



Parent/Carer Reminder:

In the interest of your child's health and safety, it is your responsibility to ensure all information on Healthcare Plans is kept up to date. As always, if you have any issues accessing any Apps, Portals or just need general assistance, please email office@five.acre.kent.sch.uk and someone will get back to you.