

Welcome back to school, everyone! We are thrilled to kick off the summer term, a time that always proves to be incredibly busy for both staff and children alike. As we dive into the weeks ahead, we encourage you to keep checking our newsletters, Tapestry, and Seesaw for the latest updates—there's always something exciting happening!

The children have returned to school with bright smiles and a delightful buzz of enthusiasm, eager to share all about their holiday adventures. It's lovely to hear their stories and see their excitement as they settle back into school life after a fun break.

During the holidays, the school was bustling with activity as we entered the final phase of our building works. Chris and the Arc team worked tirelessly to fit new windows and doors at the front of the school. They also expertly managed to remove the scaffolding and make significant progress on the F2 classrooms. Thanks to their hard work, we can now truly appreciate how amazing our school is beginning to look!

With most of the interior improvements now complete, our attention has turned to the exterior of the school. We are pleased to welcome back Henny and Pobble, our beloved hens, who are now enjoying their usual space again. With the lifting of bird flu restrictions, they now have the freedom to roam, much to the delight of the children.

In addition to our feathered friends, Mr Harper, our dedicated site manager, is gearing up to enhance the front of the school with some lovely new planters and trellis. He is keen on upcycling any materials we already have, but we would love your help! If you happen to have any offcuts of wood that you think could be useful, please let us know.



On Tuesday, 22nd April, we celebrated World Earth Day, where the children spent time learning about the importance of taking care of our planet. They engaged in various activities that helped them understand how we can all contribute to a healthier environment. It was wonderful to see their enthusiasm and creativity as they explored nature and discussed ways to protect it.

As a school committed to sustainability, we are excited to announce our plan to plant more wildflowers around the school grounds. Not only do wildflowers brighten up our surroundings, but they also provide vital habitats for bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. By cultivating these flowers, we can help support local wildlife and promote biodiversity in our area.

If you have any spare wildflower seeds at home, we would greatly appreciate your donations. Every little bit helps, and together, we can create a beautiful and environmentally-friendly space for our children to enjoy and learn in.

Thank you for your continued support in fostering a love for nature and caring for our planet.





We have been informed of our new starters for September in F2. Mrs Henson, our Early Years Lead, will be reaching out to each family soon to say hello and provide a warm welcome. She is excited to get to know everyone and ensure that the transition is as smooth and enjoyable as possible. Here is some useful information in the meantime. The starting school in September information will be updated shortly.

[Phoenix Infant and Nursery School - School Uniform](#)

[Phoenix Infant and Nursery School - Starting School in September 2025](#)

As we usher in new beginnings, we must also prepare to say goodbye to our Year 2 children, who will soon be embarking on their next adventure at Priory Junior School. We are working closely with their team to ensure a seamless transition. After half term, the staff and SENCo from Priory will be making visits to our school to meet your children in their current setting, alongside their staff. This collaboration aims to create a cohesive support system for your children as they move on to this new chapter. The children will also be visiting Priory -keep an eye out for an informative letter that will be sent out shortly, detailing important dates and key information about this transition. There will also be a transition plan in place for all year groups in school to prepare them for their next steps.

One important date to mark in your calendars is Wednesday, 2nd July. On this day, all children will spend time in their new classes, getting to know their new teachers and classmates. Our Year 2 children will also have the opportunity to visit Priory Junior School for the morning. It's a wonderful chance for them to familiarise themselves with their new environment and what lies ahead. We will inform parents about the new class allocations on Monday, 30th June, so please stay tuned!

MIXED YEAR GROUPS

In recent years, schools across England have faced significant challenges associated with the declining birth rate. This trend has led to a reduction in the number of children entering primary education, a situation that particularly affects two-form entry schools such as ours. As a consequence of these demographic changes, we have made the decision to transition to mixed year group classes. Specifically, our Key Stage 1 (KS1) provision will consist of three classes encompassing all Year 1 and Year 2 children, while our Foundation Stage will remain unchanged.

This move is not one made lightly; it is a strategic response to the shrinking cohorts of children in our local area. By combining Year 1 and Year 2 children into mixed classes, we aim to create a more cohesive learning environment that maximises the resources available to us. Although some may have initial concerns regarding the impact of mixed-age classes on children's learning and development, research demonstrates that these arrangements do not have detrimental effects. In fact, they can often foster enhanced social skills and collaborative learning opportunities.

Mixed-year group classes allow for a more versatile teaching approach. Teachers can tailor their instruction to meet the varying needs of children from different year groups, promoting differentiated learning experiences that can be highly beneficial. This setup encourages older children to take on leadership roles, supporting their younger peers and reinforcing their own understanding in the process. Moreover, children in mixed-age settings often exhibit increased motivation and engagement, as they benefit from the diversity of perspectives and experiences that their classmates bring to the classroom. that every child continues to thrive in an engaging and supportive setting.

We recognise that this transition may present initial adjustments for both children and staff. However, we are confident that through carefully planned curricula and a supportive environment, we can create a positive and productive learning experience. Our teachers will undergo training and have time to equip them with the strategies necessary to engage children from multiple year groups effectively. As we embark on this new chapter, our commitment to providing the highest quality education remains unwavering. We believe that adapting to these changing circumstances not only presents challenges but also offers opportunities for growth and innovation within our school community. As we implement these mixed year group classes, we look forward to working closely with parents and caregivers to ensure a smooth transition.

What is a mixed age class?

A mixed age class is a class in which there are children who are from more than one year group within the same classroom. Due to Infant class sizing dictated by the DfE, classes are capped at 30.

What are the benefits of mixed age classes?

Research evidences that mixed-age classrooms are beneficial for young children's development. Not only do children out-perform peers of the same age academically, studies also show that they thrive socially and emotionally.

Mixed-age classrooms generate a group of learners who support and care for one another. Older children have the opportunity to serve as mentors and take leadership roles. These children model more sophisticated approaches to problem solving, helping younger children to accomplish tasks they would not be able to do independently whilst completing their own learning. This dynamic increases the older child's level of independence and competence while increasing the younger child's spirit of belonging in a community of learners. Younger children will have the opportunity to extend their learning and increase their vocabulary whilst working alongside older children.

Children learn to form wider friendships and relate to broader groups of children, there is a greater sense of cooperation and opportunities to work with a wider circle of peers. This has been evident from lunchtimes that the children have already made friendships across the year groups and look forward to the opportunities to play together.

How has the decision to mix year groups been made?

Each year we review the numbers in each year group, as well as the individual needs of pupils in the group. We model different scenarios for the year, and the following years, and discuss this with Governors. We have to consider the best ways to meet the needs of all of the year groups. There is never one simple answer but a key factor is that we do not prioritise the needs of one year group above the needs of another.

How will pupils be allocated in classes?

The main focus is that all classes across the school are mixed and balanced. Staff spend a great deal of time to carefully consider them. When placing pupils in classes we carefully consider friendship groups, as we appreciate this is fundamentally important at this age, however we also consider where a change of social group can be helpful.

We dedicate a lot of our time to get it right. I hope you will support our decision and trust that we will ensure that your child continues to be happy, achieves to the best of their abilities and receive a well-balanced and engaging curriculum. We will send out a 'Friendship Island' soon so you can also share important friendships too.

Will my child be repeating the same work next year?

No, our mixed age classes (in KS1) will follow a two-year rolling program of study. We have developed this rolling programme from our already successful and, as highlighted by Ofsted, 'ambitious curriculum' to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum over a two-year period. National Curriculum content for children from both years (where applicable) in KS1 has been carefully considered to ensure that the progression of knowledge is clear. Children in Reception follow the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum.

How will progress be monitored?

Progress in all classes is monitored closely by the Leadership Team. Teachers regularly assess pupils, informally day to day. Where pupils need extra help we work on creative ways to support this and challenge. This is the same whether within a mixed or single year class.

Teachers regularly compare work on Seesaw/books across the team to compare outcomes and develop consistency between different teachers. Three times a year we hold Pupil Progress Meetings which focus on monitoring assessment information and ensuring that pupils are making the progress we expect. Governors monitor the progress of pupils termly, as well as over time.

How will we ensure that children cope socially and emotionally with changes in their current class?

For all children, regardless of which class they are moving into, transition can create a feeling of anxiety and uncertainty. Parents can help greatly by acknowledging that nerves are normal and helping children think about times they have experienced change and the good things that have followed it. As part of our normal practice and dedication to mental health and wellbeing, every year we identify groups of children across the school that benefit from additional support during transition time and this will continue this year.

As a staff we are feeling positive and motivated to embrace the changes ahead and the exiting opportunities it will offer the children. It is so important that you are as positive as we are about the mixed classes with your children, as this really helps them with transition.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS



As we embark on this new term, our primary focus is to ensure that children are attending school every day. We are thrilled to share that across the school, we have witnessed a significant reduction in the number of children who have been persistently absent over the past year. This is a fantastic achievement, and it is down to the efforts we've made in working closely with families to promote the importance of school attendance.

Creating an environment where children feel happy and safe is crucial in encouraging regular attendance. In KS1, we are proud to report that only 3% of our children have attendance below 90%. However, we have noticed a much higher percentage in Foundation 2, which is causing us some concern. It's vital that we continue to address this issue head-on and families we are not already working with will be contacted for a meeting to review what's working well but how we can support moving forward. Our aim is to ensure that good habits regarding school attendance are firmly in place - we can see that our children's attendance does increase significantly in Year 1 and Year 2.

As we move forward, let's remember that this is a fresh start for everyone. We will again be giving out certificates for those who achieve an impressive attendance rate of above 97% at the end of each term. This is a great opportunity to celebrate their hard work and commitment.

We believe that with everyone's joint efforts, we can significantly improve attendance in Foundation 2. Let's encourage the children to embrace this new term with enthusiasm and to come to school every day, ready to learn and grow. With the right support and encouragement, we can help every child in Foundation 2 achieve this goal. Remember, every day counts, and we are here to support you every step of the way. Together, let's make this term a wonderful success in terms of attendance, ensuring every child feels valued and eager to come to school!

Have a wonderful weekend! Mrs Harper and the Phoenix Team

Diary dates

- Tuesday 22nd April - **First day of summer Term**
- Wednesday 14th May **F2 visit to Sundown**
- Wednesday 21st May **Yr visit Yorkshire Wildlife Park**
- Half term - Monday 26 May 2025 to Friday 30 May 2025
- W/C 9th June 2025 - **Year 1 Phonics Screening**
- Thursday 12th June 2025 - **Year 2 Residential to Gulliver's Valley**
- Wednesday 18th June 2025 9.30 am - **KS1 Sports day 9.30am**
- Wednesday 25th June 2025 - **F1/F2 Sports day 10.00am / 2.00pm**
- **Wednesday 2nd July - Moving up morning**
- **Friday 4th July 2025- INSET DAY**
- **Friday 11th July 2025 -Reports to parents**
- Thursday 24th July 2025 - **Year 2 Leavers assembly 2.00pm**
- **Friday 25th July 2025- Last day of term- END OF ACADEMIC YEAR**