



CHARLTON SPOTLIGHT



EYFS

From Bikeability to
Fruit Chopping –
Busy Days in Early
Years!

YEAR 1-2

Year 1 & 2 Adventures
in Learning from
Ocean Depths to
Pirate Decks!

YEAR 3-4

From Digestion
Experiments to
Disciples' Voices –
Year 3 & 4 in Action!

YEAR 5-6

From
Metamorphosis to
Mass – A Journey of
Growth in Year 5 & 6!

HEAD TEACHER'S MESSAGE



It has been another wonderfully busy and enriching half term here at school, filled with memorable experiences, opportunities for learning beyond the classroom, and moments that truly reflect our strong sense of community and shared values.

There are lots of details throughout the newsletter of all of the wonderful activities and learning experiences the children have been part of; each event has played an important role in developing the whole child, building confidence, resilience, curiosity, and compassion alongside academic learning.

The week beginning 4th May saw the heats of our annual speech competition. We were incredibly impressed by the quality of presentations and the dedication shown by all who took part. Every child demonstrated courage, effort, and enthusiasm, making the judging process extremely challenging. We are immensely proud of each participant. We now look forward to the finals, which will take place on Friday 22nd May, where we will once again celebrate the children's oracy skills and confidence. It has been particularly inspiring to see our children finding and using their voice with confidence and courage. These are skills that will serve them not only in school, but throughout their lives.

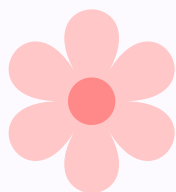
This half term has also seen the children take part in a Kindness Crew assembly, where they were introduced to characters facing friendship challenges. Through discussion and reflection, the children explored how kindness, empathy, and understanding can strengthen relationships and support others. Developing these social and emotional skills is essential, as it helps to create a respectful, caring, and inclusive school community where everyone feels valued and supported. In a world that can sometimes feel challenging, teaching our children to lead with kindness and compassion is more important than ever.

As I write this, we approach our final week before the half-term break, with much still to enjoy. As we look ahead to the final half term, it is always a special time to celebrate achievements, come together as a community, and reflect on how far the children have come this year. There is plenty to be excited about. Please look out for further details regarding upcoming events, including Founders' Day, Sports Day, our family barbeque, bake sale, and prizegiving, to name just a few.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. It is through our strong partnership that we are able to provide such rich and meaningful experiences for the children.

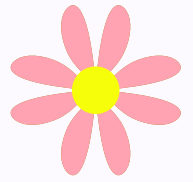
I wish you all a restful and enjoyable half-term break.

Mrs Lea Pay
Head Teacher



SPOTLIGHTS

Shining the light on our top performers



Students

SPEECH COMPETITION



Finalists

Congratulations to our Speech competition finalists

Lazuli Year 1 - Kenya

Amelia Year 2 - Healthy Eating and Exercise

Millie Year 3 - the Mary Rose

Adena - Year 4 - Will AI take our dream jobs?

Ellen Year 5 - The Canary Islands

Peyton Year 6 - King Cobras



MR DARBY

Staff

**Yr R, Deputy Head and
Prayer and Liturgy
Coordinator**



Our spotlight this half term is Mr Darby, a valued member of staff who brings a wealth of enthusiasm and expertise to our school community. As Deputy Headteacher, SENDCo, and Prayer and Liturgy Coordinator, he plays a key role in many aspects of school life. In particular, his work in leading prayer and liturgy ensures that the Catholic life and mission of the school remain at the heart of all we do, carefully planning and writing our services and Masses. Mr Darby is also a man of many talents beyond the classroom; he is a fluent French speaker, a talented singer, and is well known for his collection of wonderfully unique and interesting odd socks!



WHOLE SCHOOL

On Friday 24th April, we were proud to host an Eastertide Community Mass, welcoming children and adults from our local Catholic schools. It was a beautiful and reverent celebration of the Easter season. This was followed with a retreat for Years 5 & 6 - read on for more details.



One of the highlights this half term was the visit from the Air Ambulance, which all year groups had the opportunity to take part in. The children learned about the vital, life-saving role the Air Ambulance team plays in our community. They were fascinated to see firsthand some of the specialist equipment used by the crew and were especially excited to try on elements of the uniform and safety gear. Visits such as this bring learning to life, helping children to appreciate real-world careers, understand the importance of service, and develop awareness of how people help and care for others in times of need.



We have been delighted to welcome two chicks to the Charlton House family this half term. After carefully incubating the eggs, the children were very excited to see them begin to hatch last week. Although four chicks hatched initially, sadly two were quite poorly and did not survive. The children have been supported in understanding this in a sensitive and age-appropriate way, and it has provided an important opportunity for them to learn about the natural cycle of life, including both joy and loss. Experiences such as this help children to develop empathy, resilience, and a deeper understanding of the world around them.

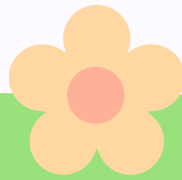


On Friday 8th May, we gathered for our beautiful Queen of the May celebration, honouring Mary, the mother of Jesus, in a special way that is central to Catholic tradition during this month. The children took part in a procession around the statue of Mary, laying flowers at her feet as a sign of love and devotion. Ruan and Elisha had the special role of presenting the crown of flowers for Mary. This act of collective worship helps our children to deepen their understanding of faith, reflect on the virtues of Mary, and participate in meaningful traditions that are part of our Catholic identity.



EARLY YEARS

Early Years marked a very special occasion this half term by celebrating the birthday of Sir David Attenborough. The children made him a beautiful banner and took part in a range of nature-based activities throughout the day. This was a wonderful way to inspire curiosity about the natural world and to encourage the children to develop an early appreciation for the environment and the importance of caring for it.



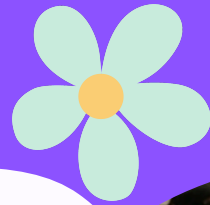
In Early Years, the children have also been developing their independence and practical life skills through learning how to safely prepare food. Using child-friendly safety knives, they have practised their chopping skills while exploring and tasting a variety of fruits and vegetables. This hands-on experience not only supports their fine motor development but also encourages healthy eating habits, builds confidence, and promotes a willingness to try new foods.

Our youngest pupils in Early Years enjoyed a wonderfully immersive Pirate Day, full of excitement, imagination, and exploration. Dressed as pirates, the children took part in a range of engaging, hands-on activities that brought their learning to life, including a special visit from Creative History. Experiences such as these are invaluable in the early stages of education, helping to spark curiosity, develop language skills, and encourage imaginative play in a joyful and memorable way.

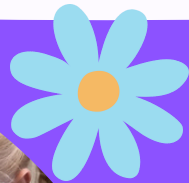


In Early Years, we are also pleased to be able to offer balance bike sessions, led by Miss Richardson, who completed Bikeability training last year. Through these sessions, the children are developing their coordination, balance, and confidence in a fun and supportive environment. Learning to ride balance bikes at an early age provides an excellent foundation for future cycling skills while encouraging independence and promoting an active lifestyle.

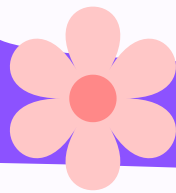
KEY STAGE 1



Year 1 and Year 2 have certainly had their thinking caps on! Using a selection of different hats as inspiration, the children have been practising how to write thoughtful and well-punctuated questions. They imagined that someone had lost a hat and carefully examined the details, considering what clues they could use to ask meaningful questions. This creative approach helped to develop their curiosity, language skills, and understanding of how to form clear and purposeful questions.



Year 1 and Year 2 have been exploring habitats in Science, focusing on a different habitat each week. The children learned about the different layers of the ocean, the habitats found within them, and the variety of creatures that live there. To bring their learning to life, they created their own ocean habitat bottles, carefully designing and constructing miniature underwater worlds. This hands-on activity helped to deepen their understanding while encouraging creativity and engagement in their learning.

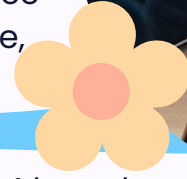


Year 1 and Year 2 pupils also took part in an exciting Pirate Day, embracing the opportunity to immerse themselves fully in their topic. Through a range of interactive activities, including a visit from Creative History, the children developed their understanding in a creative and engaging way. These immersive experiences support learning by building confidence, encouraging collaboration, and fostering a love of learning that stays with the children beyond the classroom.



KEY STAGE 2

As part of their topic on Animals (including Humans), Year 3 and Year 4 have been learning about the different organs of the body and their functions. To deepen their understanding, the children took part in a practical activity to demonstrate how the digestive system works. By mimicking the role of the stomach, they explored how food is broken down, with a focus on how nutrients are absorbed and how waste is eventually created and expelled. This hands-on experience made a complex process both engaging and memorable, helping to bring their scientific learning to life.



In RE, Year 3 and Year 4 have been exploring Eastertide in greater depth by studying the accounts of Jesus' resurrection as told by four of the disciples. The children then selected one disciple to "interview", writing thoughtful scripts and bringing them to life through performances for their classmates. This creative approach not only deepened their understanding of the Easter story but also helped to develop their empathy, communication skills, and confidence in expressing their ideas.

Year 5 and Year 6 have been studying life cycles in Science, comparing how different animals grow and change over time. We have been fortunate to have caterpillars in school, giving the children the opportunity to observe metamorphosis first-hand. Watching the transformation from caterpillar to butterfly has brought their learning to life, helping them to develop a deeper understanding of life processes and an appreciation for the natural world.



Following the Mass, our Year 5 and Year 6 pupils joined children from other schools for an Eastertide retreat. They took part in a carousel of activities, including meditation, sports and games, a forest school session where they created 'journey sticks', and a creative arts activity where each child crafted a lily to contribute to a shared community cross. The morning was a wonderful expression of faith, reflection, and togetherness, strengthening the bonds between our schools and reminding us of the importance of belonging to a wider community rooted in shared values.

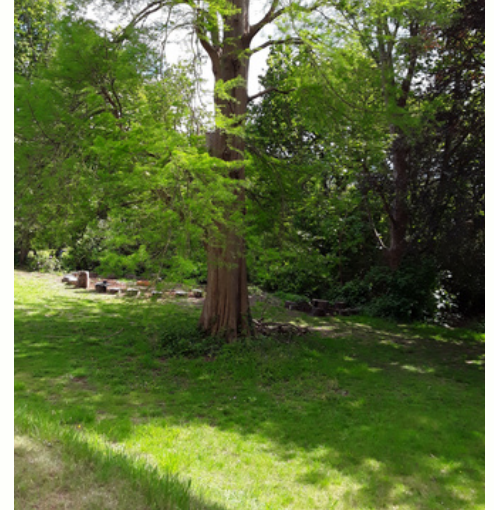
SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO GROW STRONGER

HELPING CHILDREN BUILD CONFIDENCE, RESILIENCE AND INDEPENDENCE

IN TODAY'S WORLD, IT IS NATURAL TO WANT TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM DIFFICULTY, CHALLENGE, AND DISCOMFORT.

However, research increasingly suggests that experiencing manageable challenges is an essential part of healthy development.

The extract below, taken from *The Anxious Generation* by Jonathan Haidt, uses a powerful metaphor to explain this idea. Just as trees need wind to grow strong and resilient, children also need opportunities to face small setbacks, solve problems, and navigate emotions in order to build confidence and independence.



IN THE LATE 1980S, A GRAND EXPERIMENT WAS LAUNCHED IN THE ARIZONA DESERT.



Biosphere 2 was (and still is) the largest attempt to build a closed artificial ecosystem, as a prelude to (someday) building self-sustaining ecosystems in outer space. Biosphere 2 was designed to support eight people, who would attempt to live within it for several years. All of the oxygen they breathed, the water they drank, and the

food they ate was to be generated within the facility. That goal was never reached. The complexity of biological interactions among species and social interactions among humans proved to be too much, but a great deal was learned from the multiple failures. For instance, many of the trees they planted to create a rainforest ecosystem grew rapidly but then fell over before reaching maturity. The designers had not realized that young trees need wind to grow properly. When the wind blows, it bends the tree, which tugs at the roots on the windward side and compresses the wood on the other side.





IN RESPONSE, THE ROOT SYSTEM EXPANDS TO PROVIDE A FIRMER ANCHOR WHERE IT IS NEEDED, AND THE COMPRESSED WOOD CELLS CHANGE THEIR STRUCTURE TO BECOME STRONGER AND FIRMER.

This altered cell structure is called reaction wood, or sometimes stress wood. Trees that are exposed to strong winds early in life become trees that can withstand even stronger winds when full grown. Conversely, trees that are raised in a protected greenhouse sometimes fall over from their own weight before they reach maturity.

SO HOW DOES THIS LINK TO MAKING CHILDREN STRONGER?

Stress wood is the perfect metaphor for children, who also need to experience frequent stressors in order to become strong adults.

Well-intentioned parents who try to raise their children in a bubble of satisfaction, protected from frustration, consequences, and negative emotions, may be harming their children.

They may be blocking the development of competence, self-control, frustration tolerance, and emotional self-management. Several studies find that such "coddling" or "helicopter parenting" is correlated with later anxiety disorders, low self efficacy (which is the inner confidence that one can do what is needed to reach one's goals), and difficulty adjusting to college.



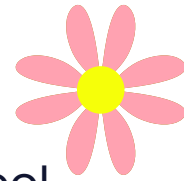
Children are intrinsically antifragile, which is why overprotected children are more likely to become adolescents who are stuck in defend mode. In defend mode, they're likely to learn less, have fewer close friends, be more anxious, and experience more pain from ordinary conversations and conflicts. (Haidt 2025)



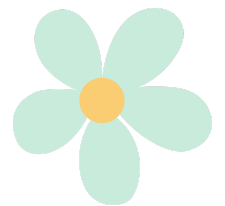
IN SUMMARY, ALLOWING CHILDREN TO EXPERIENCE CHALLENGE, MAKE MISTAKES, AND NAVIGATE DIFFICULTIES IS NOT HARMFUL; IT IS ESSENTIAL. BY GIVING THEM THE SPACE TO DEVELOP RESILIENCE, INDEPENDENCE, AND CONFIDENCE, WE ARE HELPING THEM TO GROW INTO STRONG, CAPABLE INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE BETTER PREPARED FOR THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF LIFE AHEAD.

SUMMER TERM - 2ND HALF DATES

JUNE



- Monday 1st – 8.40am Children Return to school
- Friday 5th – Whole School Trip to Winchester Science centre
- Monday 8th – Stay and Play – All welcome up to age 5
- Tuesday 9th – Southampton Track and Field event @ Sports Centre
- Wednesday 10th – EYFS Transition Forest School Session
- Friday 12th – Sports Day – Pupils to wear PE kit
- Friday 12th – PTA Barbecue After School
- Monday 15th – Stay and Play – All welcome up to age 5
- Tuesday 16th – Founders' Day Mass at 9.30am – All Welcome
- Tuesday 16th – Founders' Day Bake Off – TBC
- Tuesday 16th – Founders' Day – Afternoon tea at 3pm – All Welcome
- Thursday 18th – Back up Sports Day
- W/C Monday 29th – SEND Meetings by appointment
- Monday 29th – Y5&6 Wimbledon Trip
- Tuesday 30th – Transition Morning for All Pupils

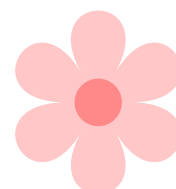


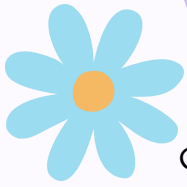
JULY

- Friday 3rd – Swimming Gala at The Quays
- Thursday 9th – School Reports Out
- Thursday 9th – 1.30pm End of Year and Leavers Mass – All Welcome
- Friday 10th – Last Day of Term – School closes at 3.45pm

HOLIDAY CLUB

Wednesday 22nd July – Friday 14th August





May Puzzle Page

Count how many of Mary's Flowers are hidden around the newsletter.

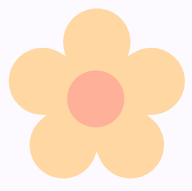
Flowers

a m a r y l l i s a f f s b
d c a r n a t i o n t n n i
a l a y w n y l l o h r a o
f u w y h n m e n e y e p n
f p b m o w y e w e a w d a
o i i e e h m g h b c o r i
d n p y f t y y e n i l a a
i l a v e n d e r m n f g e
l i w g e r b e r a t n o p
n h r m h a i h y w h r n t
y o w b e r g a m o t o l e
f b h y l i l a l l a c l e
y l l m g y a s o m i m e w
p r i m r o s e y n w a b s

amaryllis	cornflower	hyacinth	peony
bergamot	daffodil	lavender	primrose
calla lily	forget-me-not	lupin	snapdragon
carnation	gerbera	mimosa	sweet pea

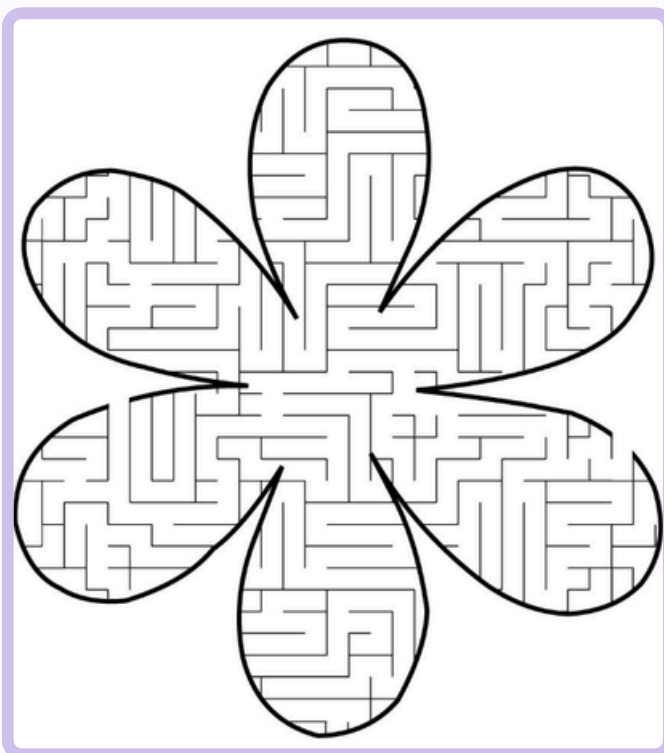
What did the big flower say to the little flower?

Hey, bud.



Guess the flower!

-  
-  
-   
-  
-  
-    



How many of these flowers can you find over half-term?

 primrose	 snowdrop	 lesser celandine
 wood anemone	 cow parsley	 bluebell
 yellow archangel	 common dog-violet	 wood sorrel

How many flowers are hidden?
Guess the Flower Answers 1 Foxglove 2 Corn flower 3 Cowslip 4 Honeysuckle 5 Globeflower 6 Ox eye daisy



Did you find Mr Penfold hiding in this issue?

Safeguarding

If you have any safeguarding concerns, please email our
Designated Safeguarding Lead at:
safeguarding@charltonhouseindependentschool.co.uk

You can also visit our website using the QR code below to
access our policies and for further advice and guidance.

