



Spring 1 2026

Issue 01

CHARLTON SPOTLIGHT

YEAR R

New classroom, new adventures!

KINDERGARTEN

Little learners, big discoveries!

YEAR 3-4

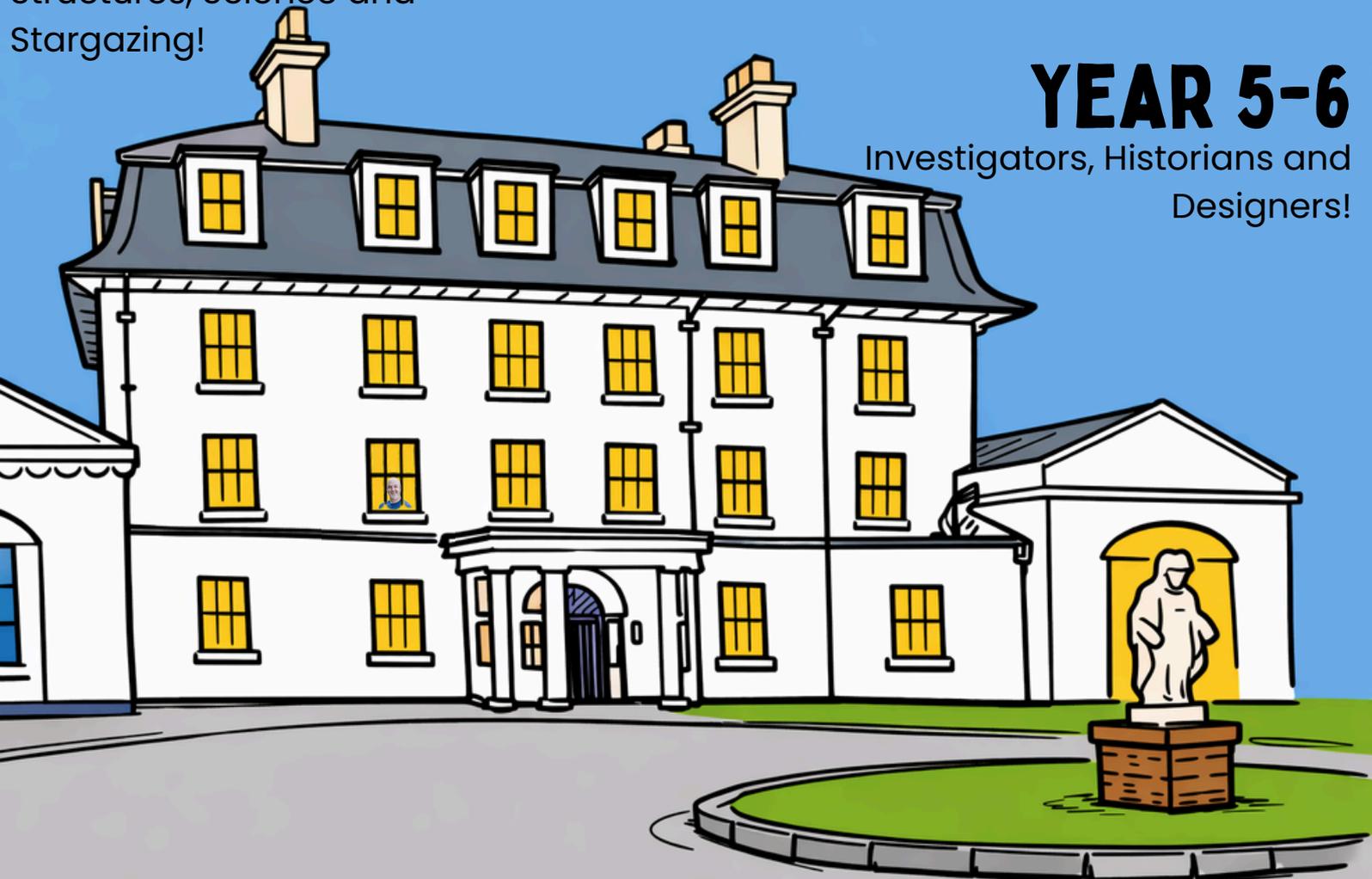
Structures, Science and Stargazing!

YEAR 1-2

Castles, creativity and curious minds!

YEAR 5-6

Investigators, Historians and Designers!





HEAD TEACHER'S MESSAGE

Welcome to our first half-termly printed newsletter of 2026. We are really excited to be sharing this first edition with you and hope that this publication will grow and develop throughout the year. If you have any suggestions of things you would like to see included in future newsletters, please do let us know – we would love to hear your ideas.

We have certainly had a busy and joyful start to the year, beginning on our very first day back with a celebration of Epiphany. This important feast reminds us of the revelation of Jesus to the wider world and encourages us to reflect on themes of generosity, faith and welcome. The children, as always, were respectful and reverent, and sang beautifully, making the celebration a truly special start to the term.

Since then, there has been much to celebrate across the school. Reception now have a classroom of their very own with Mr Darby and have been thoroughly enjoying exploring their new surroundings. This new space is already supporting their independence, confidence and sense of belonging. Kindergarten have also benefited from having the Early Years classroom to themselves in the mornings, and it has been a pleasure to spend time with them downstairs as they begin to flourish socially, developing friendships, communication skills and self-confidence.

In Key Stage 1, Year 1 and Year 2 have begun their history topic on Castles and Knights, which has captured their imagination. This topic supports their understanding of the past, encourages curiosity and questioning, and helps them to develop early historical vocabulary while engaging in creative play and storytelling. Meanwhile, Year 3 and Year 4 have been exploring digital art in their art lessons, building valuable skills in creativity, problem-solving and digital literacy, while learning to express ideas in new and exciting ways.

Year 5 and Year 6 have started their topic on World War Two with a visit from Creative History and are learning about what life was like during this significant period. This topic encourages empathy, critical thinking and a deeper understanding of how historical events have shaped the world we live in today.

Alongside all of these wonderful learning experiences, we have also celebrated a Mass for our school Saints, beautifully presented by Year 5 and Year 6. This was a meaningful opportunity for the children to deepen their understanding of our shared faith, reflect on the values of service and kindness, and grow in confidence as they led the school community in prayer.

We have taken part in the RSPB Great School Birdwatch, encouraging the children to observe the natural world around them, develop a sense of environmental responsibility, and work together to collect and share information. Our celebration of Number Day in support of the NSPCC combined mathematical learning with an important message about helping others, showing the children how they can make a positive difference beyond our school.

We also enjoyed a visit and talk from Tom and his guide dog, which helped the children to better understand disability, independence and inclusion, and reminded us of the importance of empathy and respect for all. In addition, our week of mindfulness and quiet thought for Children's Mental Health Week gave the children valuable time to pause, reflect and learn strategies to support their own wellbeing, as well as that of others.

All of these experiences highlight the importance of working collaboratively – as pupils, staff, families and a wider community – to nurture not only academic learning, but also compassion, resilience and a strong sense of social responsibility.

What a lot we have fit in already – and we are only just getting started. Thank you, as always, for your continued support as we journey through another exciting term together.

Mrs Lea Pay
Head Teacher





SPOTLIGHTS

Shining the light on our top performers

Student



DONATELLO |

Year 6 **St Milner**

Southampton FC Under 11s

Donatello recently played in a football tournament in Malta. He played against Balzan FC, Inter-Milan and Sporting Lisbon, amongst other clubs. His team won first prize in the silver cup!

Staff

| **MRS ELLIS**

Kindergarten Lead



Happy Birthday Kindergarten

This January our Kindergarten turned 2 years old! Thanks to the leadership of Mrs Ellis the Kindergarten has grown significantly leading to a happy, thriving year group.



KINDERGARTEN

This half term, Kindergarten have been exploring the wonderful world of animals in Science. The children worked together to create a beautiful collaborative animal collage, which was a lovely opportunity to practise teamwork and creativity. They also enjoyed a nature scavenger hunt in our woodland area, spotting signs of wildlife and collecting natural treasures along the way.



Back in the classroom, the children have been busy producing a range of animal-themed artwork, each piece showing their growing confidence and imagination. Alongside their topic work, they have continued to make great progress in Phonics and Maths, and have now begun taking home wordless books to share and discuss with their families, helping them to build and extend their recall and imagination.

YEAR R

Reception have settled brilliantly into their new classroom and have enjoyed exploring their new surroundings with great enthusiasm. In Maths, the children have been investigating the numbers 6, 7 and 8 – learning how to recognise them, form them correctly, and work with simple addition. They have also been busy exploring early measurement, including mass, volume, length and width. What busy little mathematicians they have been!



In Phonics, the class have now learned all of their Set 1 sounds and have been practising blending and segmenting words with growing confidence. They are very excited to begin Set 2 sounds after half term.

Alongside Kindergarten, Reception have been studying animals and their habitats. The children have loved exploring, hunting for clues outdoors, and creating their own animals and habitats through art and play.

YEAR 1 & 2

Year 1 and 2 have made a fantastic start to their new History topic on Castles and Knights. The children have been learning to identify different types of castles, understand why they were built, and explore who lived and worked within their walls. Through this, they are developing key historical skills such as asking questions, comparing past and present, and using simple sources to find information.

In Art and DT, the children have been strengthening their design and making skills. They began by creating their own wooden-spoon people, learning how to join materials and adapt their ideas as they worked. They then moved on to digital art, experimenting with tools and techniques to create imaginative, original pieces – a lovely blend of creativity and technology.



Forest School has given them the chance to explore natural materials and practise early printing techniques. By creating wall hangings, they have been developing fine-motor skills, pattern-making, and an appreciation for the textures and shapes found outdoors.

In Science, Year 1 and 2 have been investigating things that grow. They have explored seeds and bulbs, compared different plants, and learned about the conditions needed for healthy growth. This hands-on enquiry is helping them build early scientific understanding and vocabulary.

In PE, the children have been practising their tennis and ball skills, focusing on coordination, control and teamwork – all essential foundations for confident movement



♥ YEAR 3 & 4

Year 3 and 4 have been just as busy as the younger classes this half term. In English, they have begun a new non-fiction text, *Stargazing*, which explores what we can observe in the sky during both day and night. The children have been developing key reading skills, including retrieving information, exploring new vocabulary, and using evidence from the text to justify their ideas and opinions – all essential steps in becoming confident, thoughtful readers.

In Science, the class have been investigating magnets and magnetic materials. They have explored the different properties of magnets and carried out comparative tests to measure magnetic strength, helping them to build their understanding of fair testing and scientific enquiry.



Year 3 and 4 have also been developing their Maths skills by sorting different units of measurement into a Venn diagram. This helped them compare and classify units such as centimetres, metres, and kilometres, and understand how and when each is used. They then put this learning into action by pulling on their wellies and heading outside to measure the distance around the school grounds for our Big Lent Walk – an impressive 580 metres in total. A brilliant blend of practical maths and outdoor learning.

In DT, the children have been focusing on structures. They began by experimenting with art straws to create simple frameworks, learning how shapes and joins can strengthen a structure. They are now designing their own towers and bridges, applying what they've learned before moving on to the construction stage.



YEAR 5 & 6

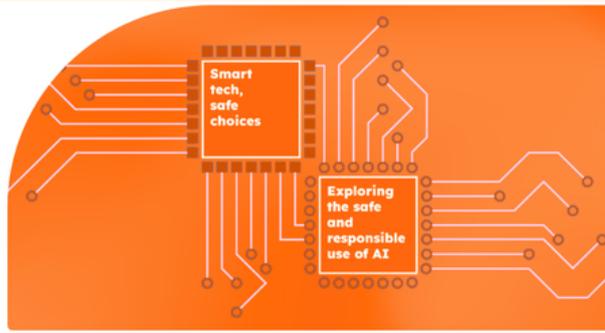


Year 5 and 6 have had an exciting start to their new History topic on World War II, beginning with a fantastic workshop from Creative History. During the session, the children learned about rationing, explored a range of fascinating wartime artefacts, and even worked together to build an air-raid shelter. This hands-on experience helped them deepen their understanding of how ordinary people lived during the war and why key events shaped life in Britain.

In English, the class have been completing their narrative non-fiction text Darwin's Voyage of Discovery. Through this book, they have followed Darwin's remarkable journey and explored the ideas that led to On the Origin of Species. The children have been developing important reading skills, including fact-finding, making inferences, and practising prediction – all of which support their ability to read critically and draw thoughtful conclusions from complex texts.



In DT, Year 5 and 6 have been working collaboratively to design and build their own volcanoes. They have been carefully planning their structures, selecting appropriate materials, and constructing their models with increasing precision. Once decorated, the children had the thrill of erupting their volcanoes, bringing together creativity, teamwork, and a practical understanding of how real volcanoes behave.



Safer Internet Day

10th February



AI technology is increasingly part of all our lives, so this Safer Internet Day we are starting a conversation about how to use it safely and responsibly. Use these top tips to help keep you and your loved ones safe online.

Enjoy going online together and talk regularly about your family's online lives

The internet is amazing and can help us all to access information and entertainment. Spend time online with your child to understand how they are using technology and talk together about the good and the bad parts of being online. Talk about your own experiences and find other opportunities to get the conversation started, like stories in the news. Make sure your child knows they can talk to you about anything that they see or experience online.

Understand where AI technology is being used and the impact it can have

From summaries on search engines, to voice assistants and photo editing tools, AI powered features are being added to many of the apps and devices we use day-to-day. Look out for information and warnings notifying you where AI technology is in use or where content has been created using AI. Help your child to recognise these too. Remember, AI can make some tasks simpler but may also collect data about you and your family, or share unreliable information, so consider how to use it safely and responsibly.

Recognise what safe and responsible use of technology looks like

To use technology, including AI, safely and responsibly, it's important to reflect on the potential impact it can have on yourself and others. How does your use of technology make you feel? How can you use technology with kindness and respect for others? Does your use of technology benefit you or help you build skills? How might it affect you now, and in the future? Ask these questions of your own internet use, as well as your family's.

Stay informed with free resources

Young people have told us about the incredible ways they're using AI, but also about their worries for what it means for the future. Issues such as the environmental impact of AI, what it means for job prospects, and the threat of deepfakes can seem scary but remember, you don't need to have all the answers. Stay informed using free resources like those produced for Safer Internet Day and talk to your child about their concerns about new technology – you can always work together to find more information.

Know where to go for help if something goes wrong

Like any technology, using AI comes with risks. Some AI tools, like ChatGPT, have built-in reporting features where you can raise issues such as inappropriate or harmful content. Many social media platforms also allow you to report content you suspect has been created with AI. Additionally, AI generated content can break the law. If you see illegal images that show child sexual abuse (including AI generated images), you should report these to the IWF and on the platform where they are being shared. If someone creates an image of you or your child using AI these can also be reported on the platform where they are being shared, and AI generated nude images can be reported to Stop NCII (for images of adults) and Report Remove or Take It Down (for images of under 18s).



Families of Faith

† February †



Prayer Corner



Dear Jesus,
Thank you for this new day,
For our family, our friends, and all
the love around us.
Thank you for the saints we
remember this month,
Who teach us to pray, be brave,
and care for others.
Help us to be kind, share our gifts,
And shine your light wherever we
go.
Amen

Saints to Inspire

14 February - St Cyril

St. Cyril and his brother St. Methodius helped teach the Slavic people about God and made the first Slavic alphabet called Glagolitic. They also translated the Bible so people could read it in their own language. Today, St. Cyril is remembered for helping people learn to read and for creating the Cyrillic alphabet.



10 February - St Scholastica

St. Scholastica, twin sister of St. Benedict, devoted her life to God and led a community of women. She is remembered for her deep faith and prayer, including a famous story where God sent a storm so she could spend more time with her brother.

Good News from the Gospel



Week 1 - Matthew 5:1-12

We listen to the Beatitudes. How can you be a peacemaker?
How can you promote peace at home or at school?

Week 2 - Matthew 5:13-16

We think about how salt brings out the best things. What good deeds can you do today? How can you bring light to the world?

Week 3 - Matthew 5: 17-37

Teaches us about following laws and commandments. What would you like to say sorry for? How can you show you are sorry?

Week 4 - Matthew 4: 1-11

We have begun Lent and hear about Jesus being tempted in the desert. What are you giving up for Lent?

Family Faith in Action

The feast of **Candlemas** is celebrated on the **2nd of February**. This day celebrates when Mary and Joseph presented baby Jesus in the temple (*Luke 2:22-40*). Here are some ideas to do at home:

- Children could decorate candles with symbols of light (stars, suns, hearts).
- Light candles and talk about Jesus as "the Light of the World."
- Say a simple prayer: "Jesus, help us to bring your light to others."

National Inventors' Day 11th February

Research an inventor. Find out more about what they created



National Random Acts of Kindness Day 11th February

Offer words of encouragement or make a donation to a local cause

National Love Your Pet Day 20th February

Our relationship with our pets are part of our call to Stewardship. Genesis 1:25



SPRING TERM - 2ND HALF DATES

FEBRUARY

Monday 23rd - 8.40am Children Return to school

Tuesday 24th - Early Years and KS1 Drama for Schools Workshops

Wednesday 25th - Parent Teacher consultations

Friday 27th - 9am Lenten Mass in School Chapel - All welcome



MARCH

Thursday 5th - KS2 Swimming

Friday 6th - World book day - Note change of date

Friday 6th - Global Day of Unplugging

Thursday 12th - KS2 Swimming

W/C 16th - SEND Meeting with class teachers and SENDCo - By appointment

Monday 16th - Big Lent Walk

Thursday 19th - KS2 Swimming

Monday 23rd - Wednesday 25th - Hooke Court Residential

Tuesday 24th - Early Years Creative history



Tuesday 24th - Y1&2 Creative history

Thursday 26th - KS2 Swimming

Friday 27th - 2pm KS2 Stations of the Cross - All welcome

Friday 27th - 3pm Open School to see children's work & Y1 - Y6

Spring Term Reports to Parents - All welcome

Friday 27th - 3.45pm school closes for Easter break

TBC

KS2 pupils visiting St Edmunds Catholic Church for Lent

Reconciliation Service - Pupils and Staff only

Valentine's Puzzle Page

Count how many ♥ hearts are hidden around this newsletter.

VALENTINE

Word Search



VALENTINE CUPID KISS HEART CANDY CARD

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| E | V | A | L | E | N | T | I | N | E |
| B | E | G | E | W | S | R | H | W | Q |
| B | I | C | U | P | I | D | H | Y | S |
| J | J | G | C | A | R | D | K | E | L |
| F | V | V | R | E | K | Q | O | F | F |
| H | P | F | U | S | A | I | W | L | T |
| M | E | H | E | A | R | T | S | A | M |
| R | J | D | J | I | A | K | J | S | K |
| C | A | N | D | Y | H | Q | G | K | C |
| W | Y | I | T | Q | T | L | J | F | L |

Valentine's Day Dog Spot the Difference!



What kind of flower do you never give on Valentine's Day?

Cauliflower.

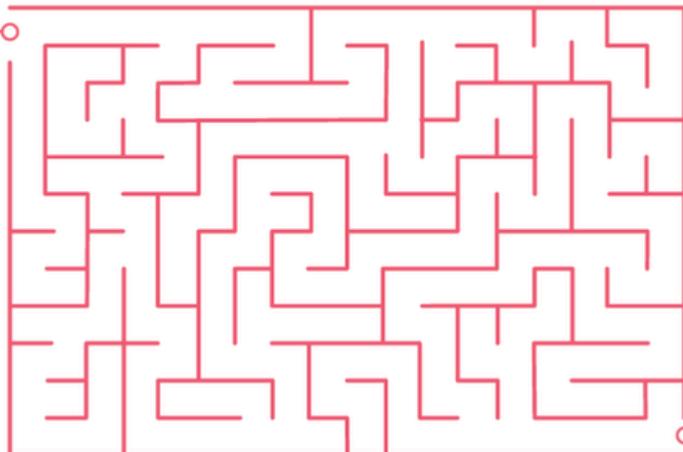


Valentine's Riddle:

What flower gives the most kisses?



Start here



End here



Valentine's Day Dog
Spot the Difference!

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.

