



8th November 2024



Dom



Xav

Our governors

Dear Parents,

It has been a while since the last communication from governors, as a result of the large changes which have occurred across the school's leadership team and governing body in the last term. Now that things have begun to re-settle into a rhythm, we'd like to make some introductions, share some thanks, and provide an update on developments in the two schools.

Firstly, we're delighted to introduce ourselves as the new **Co-Chairs of Governors**, Xav Castelino and Dom Vicinanza. We are both hugely passionate about the two schools, especially after our experience as governors prior to this (Xav at Fen Ditton and Dom at Marleigh). It has already been so encouraging to work more closely with the leadership team of the schools. Their care and drive, to provide the best possible education for our students, is just brilliant.

Dom will be in this role for a full three-year term, while Xav will be in place for the remainder of this academic year, at which point a new Co-Chair will be elected.

We are also pleased to share that, following discussions over the last few months, the governing bodies of **Fen Ditton Primary** and **Marleigh Primary Academy** have officially merged. This new combined governing body will now oversee both schools, streamlining our decision-making and creating even more opportunities for collaboration between the schools. We're confident this will strengthen our community and help us continue to grow and improve together.

Some thanks

Firstly, we feel it is important to say how grateful we all are for the time, energy and care that Stuart Wood gave in his time as Chair of Governors for the two schools. There has already been a lot for us to get our heads round as Co-Chairs of a joint governing body, so Stuart's willingness to be the sole Chair of two separate governing bodies, for such a long period of time, is just extraordinary.



... continued

He has sacrificed a huge amount to support the schools. He remains the Minister at Barnwell Baptist Church, and continues to give time to the local community – if you see him out and about, please don't hesitate to share any thanks you may have, which will mean a lot to him.

And additionally, we would love to take this opportunity to thank the **whole school community**, for the way you have been supporting the schools! Changes like this to the leadership team and structures can be challenging, but thanks to the community spirit from children, parents and staff, much of transition has occurred seamlessly.

On the same theme, we'd like to take this opportunity to express our excitement and confidence in our new Executive Headteacher, **Mrs. Thompson**, who joined us in November. Mrs. Thompson has already made a very positive impact, and we're looking forward to seeing how her leadership will continue to shape and enhance the learning experience for all of our students.

Governor matters

After many years of service as governors, **Chris Flood (Marleigh)** and **Chris Lindley (Fen Ditton)** have stepped back from their roles. We are hugely grateful for all of their efforts in their time as governors, and **Chris Lindley** is continuing to support the schools by reducing the workload on staff in policy management.

We can confirm that there was no deliberate intention to remove all governors called Chris. Additionally, we are delighted that **Hannah-Beth Clark** is joining the governing body, as a trust appointed governor, bringing with her a range of experience from working in schools.

After the merging of the governing bodies, the governors across the two schools are now:

Trust Appointed Governors: Xavier Castelino (Co-Chair), Domenico Vicinanza (Co-Chair), Adam Burns, James Burton, Hannah-Beth Clark, Lindsay Davies

Parent Governors (Fen Ditton): Miriam Ferrer

Parent Governors (Marleigh): Megha Kishore, Lauren Woods

Staff Governors: Emily Thompson (Executive Head), Rachel Bailham

Clerk: Stuart Hales



... continued

We are always keen to hear from parents who might be interested in joining the governing body, and in particular are in need of **recruiting Fen Ditton parents**, and anyone who may consider taking on the **Co-Chair role from 2025-26**. If you would like to learn more about the role and how you can contribute to the school community, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us. We'd be happy to discuss the opportunity further and explore how you can get involved.

We'd like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of our governors for their continued dedication and support. The work of the governing body is vital to the success of our schools, and we are deeply grateful for the time and energy they invest to ensure we provide a safe and inspiring environment for our children.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support, and we wish you all a successful and happy 2025!

Warm regards

Xav & Dom

Co-Chairs of Governors

Fen Ditton Primary School and Marleigh Primary Academy

xcastelino@anglianlearning.org

dvicinanza@anglianlearning.org



News from our classrooms

Hercules Class

What an exciting fortnight it has been in Hercules Class! We have been diving deep into **history**, **science**, **art**, and **maths**, tackling new challenges with enthusiasm and curiosity.

In **History**, we stepped back in time to **Ancient Greece**, exploring the fascinating differences between **Athens** and **Sparta**. The highlight was our lively debate, where students argued passionately about which city-state offered a better way of life. We also delved into the minds of great **Greek philosophers**—**Aristotle**, **Socrates**, **Pythagoras**, and **Plato**—discussing their ideas and how they continue to influence us today.

In **Science**, we've been developing our **classification skills**, starting with **animals**. The class learned how to group creatures based on their **characteristics**, focusing on **invertebrates**. We then applied our classification skills to plants, identifying different species and their features.

Our **Art** lessons have been all about **retro-futuristic art**. We've been creating **printing plates** to use for **space-inspired collagraphy**. We experimented with different materials—lentils, rice, bubble wrap, and hessian—to create our unique printing plates. The results have been fantastic.





Vulcans Class

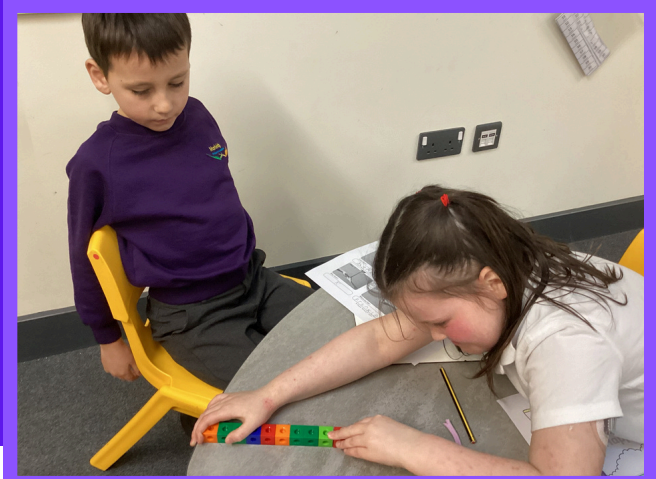
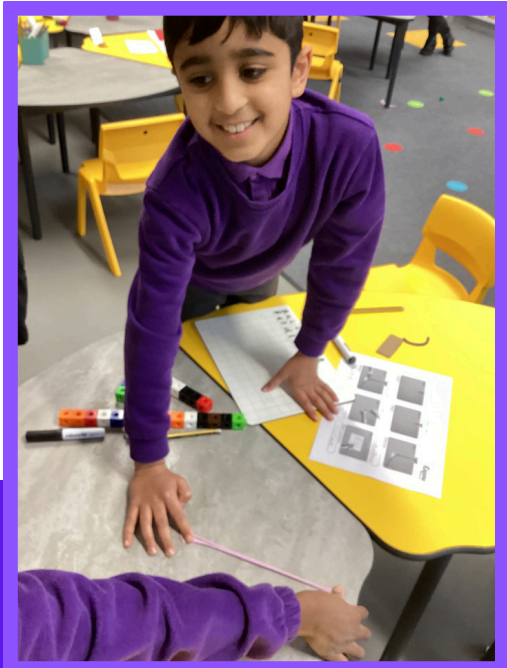
In Vulcan Class, we've had an exciting time exploring **science and history!**

In **science**, we've been investigating the properties of **materials**, experimenting with **twisting, stretching, bending**, and **squashing** to understand how different materials behave.

In **history**, we've learned about the fascinating journeys of **Amelia Earhart** and the **moon landings**. We even came up with some great questions to ask **Neil Armstrong**, like, *"How did you feel when you stepped onto the moon?"*

On Tuesday, we had a fantastic time at our **sports event**, participating in a variety of activities and games with the children from **Fen Ditton**. It was a great opportunity for everyone to stay active and have fun! Thank you to **Mr Parker** for organising this for us.

Next week, we will have our class assembly, which we are very excited about, and we will be saying goodbye to **Mrs Tyson** as she ends her placement with us. We look forward to welcoming **Mr Chambers** back to Vulcan Class after the half term holiday.





Comets Class

This week in **EYFS**, we had a delightful time reading the story of **The Gingerbread Man** and then retold the story using props, bringing the characters to life. To help with the retelling, we also created a class story map, which was a fun way for the children to remember the sequence of events.

Creative Play and Imaginative Cooking in Action!

This week in our classroom, we saw some wonderful examples of creativity and role play. One child carefully used cutters to shape a gingerbread man out of play-doh, showcasing excellent **fine motor skills** as they pressed and moulded the dough into a perfect shape. The child took on the role of a chef, very seriously pretending to cook the gingerbread man in the role play oven!

In **phonics** we have been learning **//y//** and **//z//** and exploring words that begin or contain these sounds.

One of the **highlights** of the week was our **investigation table**! The children got to explore different **smells** that make up the gingerbread flavour, like **root ginger**, **cinnamon sticks**, and **ground ginger**. They had the chance to smell and explore these ingredients, learning about how they're used in baking and how they make the gingerbread smell so delicious.





...continued

In our **creative area** we have been colour mixing **red** and **yellow** to make **orange**. The children then painted their gingerbread. Next week we can add eyes and the buttons.

In **Maths** this week, our little learners have been exploring the concept of **capacity** in a fun and hands-on way! We have been investigating different-sized **containers** to discover how much they can hold and whether they are **nearly full, full, or empty**. The children enjoyed playing with **sand** and **water**, testing their ideas by filling and emptying containers of various shapes and sizes. It was wonderful to see the children making predictions about what would happen and then testing their ideas to see if they were correct. This activity helped develop their understanding of volume and introduced them to early mathematical concepts in a playful and engaging way.

We encourage you to continue exploring these concepts at home. You could try measuring different containers in the kitchen or garden, or even play with sand and water to see how much each container holds!

It's been a week full of creativity, exploration, and fun!
Thank you for your support!

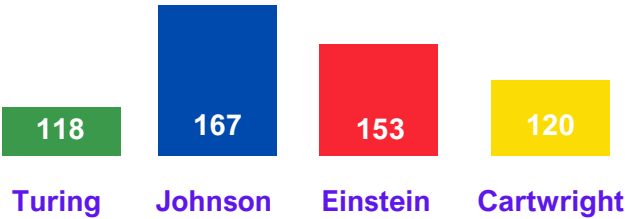
Important Reading Group Update:

Finally, please keep an eye out for a message in your child's reading journal, which will let you know which day they are scheduled to read. We've introduced new **Julia Donaldson-themed reading groups**! These groups may change from time to time, so it's important to make sure your child's reading book is in school every day.





House Point Totals



News and reminders

Click to read our latest blog posts...



STEM Light Day

Next Thursday (13.02.25) , it is our STEM Light Day! It is going to be a day full of fun and exciting STEM activities all with a light theme. **Parents are welcome to join from 3pm.**



Cool Milk

We have a lot of milk that is going to waste at the end of every week. Milk is offered to children whose parents have registered on [CoolMilk.com](https://www.coolmilk.com). If you have registered your child for milk please check they still want to receive it and update your account accordingly. No one likes to see waste!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Anushka - Blackbirds
Evie - Vulcans





...continued

RSE

Have you read the curriculum guide that was sent home? You can find it on our school website in the PSHE curriculum section. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact us.

Maths

For parents of children in **Year 1 to Year 6** please do remember the importance of your child engaging with **Times Table Rock Stars** to help their times table skills and knowledge. Practice at home is vital for this. Each child has a log in and we monitor and celebrate attainment and progress in school. As a reminder please see the guides at the end of this newsletter for how to use the programme.





Term Dates 2024/25

Spring term

Monday 6th January to Friday 4th April

Half term: Monday 17 February to Friday 21 February

Monday 24th February to Friday 4th April

Easter holidays: Monday 7 April – Friday 18th April

Summer term

Tuesday 22nd April to Wednesday 23rd July

Back to school Wednesday 24th April

Bank holiday Monday 5th May (school closed)

Half term: Monday 26th May to Friday 30th May

Back to school Tuesday 3rd June

Last day of term 23rd July

INSET Days (closed to pupils)

Tuesday 22 April

Monday 2 June

Term Dates 2025/26

Autumn term 2025

Thursday 4th September to Friday 24th October

Half term: Monday 27th October – 3rd November

Tuesday 4th November to Friday 19th December

Christmas holidays: Monday 22nd December to Tuesday 6th Jan

Spring term 2026

Tuesday 6th January to Friday 13th February

Half Term: Monday 16 February to Friday 20 February

Monday 23rd February to Friday 27th March

Easter Holidays: Monday 30th March to Friday 10th April

Summer term 2026

Monday 13th April to Friday 22nd May

Half Term: Monday 25th May to Friday 29th May

Monday 1st June to Friday 17th July

Summer Holiday: Monday 20th July onwards

INSET Days (closed to pupils)

Monday 1st September

Tuesday 2nd September

Wednesday 3rd September

Monday 3rd November

Monday 5th January

Monday 20th July

Parent Guide



We recommend a “little and often” approach; 3 minutes practice a day, 4 or 5 times a week is a good target.

What are the different Game Modes?

Single Player

Jamming 4 or 8 coins/correct answer	The only game mode without a timer, players chose the table and operation (\times or \div or both) they want to practise. Answer 10, 20 or 30 questions.
Gig 10 coins per correct answer	Gig games last 5 minutes and contain up to 100 questions, which come in ‘waves’, starting with the 10s, then the 2s, 5s, 3s, 4s, 8s, 6s, 7s, 9s, 11s and 12s. Novices are not expected to get past the 5s. Gigs provide the child (and their teacher) with a simple measure of their current skills, which is why learners should concentrate fully for the whole Gig as they won’t get another try until next month.
Garage 10 coins per correct answer	Players are given a personalised set of 6 multiplication questions (and their matching division questions) in each round. The questions they get keep adjusting to provide the best fit for every learner’s needs. This is probably the best game made for improving their recall while they’re still learning.
Studio 1 coin per correct answer	Here your child earns their Rock Status, which is based on their Studio Speed. The faster they are the better their status. Studio Speed is the average of their most recent 10 Studio games. Suitable for confident players.
Soundcheck 5 coins per correct answer	Soundcheck games ask 25 multiplication questions (up to 12×12), allowing 6 seconds for each question. Suitable for confident players.

Multi Player

Festival 1 coin per correct answer	Children compete against others from around the world, with their identities protected behind their rock names. Suitable for confident players.
Arena 1 coin per correct answer	Children race against other members of their class who are logged in and choose the same arena name at the same time. Arena games use the same smart question algorithm as Garage games.
Rock Slam 1 coin per correct answer	Players challenge their classmates or teachers to answer as many questions as they can in 60 seconds, setting a score for the challengee to beat. Pupils don’t need to be online at the same time.
Tournaments	<p>Battle of the Bands – groups of children within the same school (usually classes, year groups or teams) compete to have the highest <i>average</i> score per player.</p> <p>Top of the Rocks – like a Battle of the Bands <i>between</i> schools. The winning class or school is the one with the most correct answers per person.</p> <p>Important: Each correct answer (in any game mode) earns 1 point towards the team’s total in addition to the coins earned. For example, in Garage games each correct answer is worth 1 point for the team and 10 coins for the player.</p>

Parent Guide



Learners with different needs

How can I hide the timer?	Start a game and press ⚙️ > Hide Practice Clock. You could also play a game in Jamming.
How can I increase the length of Garage games?	Single player > Garage > press the little arrow below "play solo" > choose 1, 2 or 3 minutes.
The tables are too hard	Make sure your child is playing in Garage or Arena game modes. If this does not resolve the issue, please speak to your child's teacher. Remember that Jamming mode allows the child to choose the tables themselves.
My child gets anxious	Try the three above plus: setting mini goals (e.g. complete 2 minutes today, get 1 more point in the next game, pass 1 level); having a break from online play (come back in a couple of days); and reminding them of Baz's words: "A good rock star stays chillaxed by accepting they make mistakes."
My child has visual impairments; what settings are available?	Head to the Profile page where you can: change the colour scheme; reduce the visual stimuli with Declutter mode; increase the font size or switch to a dyslexia-friendly font called Lexie. play.ttrockstars.com is also screen reader compatible.
Can I turn off division?	Yes in Jamming mode but not in the other games. The reason for that is that practising multiplication and division at the same time supports the recall of both and is the most successful approach. If your child is finding division confusing, please speak to their teacher about starting with the 10s only and for advice on how to help at home.

Troubleshooting

My child's coins and/or Studio speed have suddenly dropped	Another child may have logged in as your child. Please reassure your child that this can be rectified. Contact their teacher who can set a new password, refund any coins, delete Studio games and talk to the class about online safety.
My child plays too much	Set firm TTRS time limits; reward healthy choices; take away devices before bed.
My child's name is showing on a school leader board.	Please ask your child's teacher to change the settings at their end so that rock names show on the leaderboards instead of real names.
What does the 🎧 mean?	If this symbol appears over a game tile (e.g. over Garage) it means the teacher has set your child a certain number of minutes to practise in that game mode for homework. Once they complete those minutes the other games unlock.

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about SCAMS AND FAKE NEWS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

"Fake news" refers to falsified or misleading material presented as a legitimate account of events. It's often used by malicious actors online to push an agenda, or even by criminals as a way of making scams more persuasive. Scammers can trick us into handing over personal information, security details and even our hard-earned cash.

"CLICKBAIT" PHISHING SCAMS

A message arrives saying "Have you seen this video of yourself?" or you might be sent an attention-grabbing headline about a celebrity that's been shared on social media. This kind of "bait" is produced by scammers to drive us to click on an unsafe link, where malware could be downloaded to our devices. These scams rely on our curiosity and our "need-to-know" instinct.

SALES, DEALS & DISCOUNTS

Some scams appear as adverts, offering a chance to buy something – such as designer products, expensive gadgets or tickets to a popular show – at a reduced price. Such plays often include a time limit or countdown, urging us to hurry so we don't miss out on the deal. This pressure encourages us to input personal details or payment information before pausing to check if it's legitimate.

YOU'RE A WINNER!

This kind of scam involves fake giveaways, opportunities or freebies. It could be a message saying we've won a prize draw or competition. Or it could be a gift, free trial, bonus credit, and suchlike. It might claim that a package or refund is waiting. All these techniques are used to prompt us to share our personal information, thinking that there's something to be gained by doing so.

FALSE FRIENDSHIPS

Scammers often pretend to be someone they're not to gain their victims' trust. They might attempt to convince any children they connect with that they're a child of similar age with shared interests. Warning signs include a high volume of messages (often with an intense tone), secrecy, inappropriate levels of intimacy, guilt tripping, emotional manipulation, threats or blackmail.

PANIC MODE

To trigger a sense of panic, scammers may claim that a child's account has been hacked, or a virus has been installed on their device, or any number of other scary scenarios. They may claim to be able to fix the problem or offer a solution – if the child hands over control of the device or sensitive information. Similar scams involve impersonating a friend or relative, claiming that they're in trouble and need help.

FAKE CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENTS

Impersonating influential people online is a common tactic for scammers, who can use technology to create fake photos, audio and even videos that look authentic. These can be used to convince us, for example, to buy products, sign up for so-called "business opportunities" or invest in cryptocurrency schemes – all of which are fake or otherwise malicious. Many scams also involve the impersonation of popular companies' social media accounts, as well as those of individuals.

Advice for Parents & Educators

STAY INFORMED

Stay up to date with the latest information and best practice on cyber-security. See what scam stories are reported in the news and make note of what tactics were used. Keep up with young people's digital lives: talk about what they're doing online and use properly endorsed resources to learn what risks certain sites and apps pose to their younger users.

ENCOURAGE HEALTHY SCEPTICISM

Most scams rely on emotional or psychological manipulation, tapping into our human instincts – whether that's to keep ourselves safe, help others, find answers, make friends, avoid losing out or to secure something we really want. Encourage children to recognise that pressure to act and to always consult with an adult – especially if what's on offer sounds too good to be true.

TALK TOGETHER

Chat often and openly with young people about fake news, online scams and how they both work. Encourage them to talk to you about anything they're unsure of or worried about online. If a child claims to have been scammed, don't pass judgement. Blaming the victim may deter young people from asking you for help. Remember: adults are scammed just as often, if not more.

BE PROACTIVE

Children increasingly use digital devices for education, socialising, shopping and play. Don't wait for a problem to arise before you discuss the risk of scams, false information and fake news. Highlight what to look out for and clearly communicate under what circumstances the child ought to speak to an adult. Finally, ensure that they're aware of the support services that are available to them (such as Childline).

Meet Our Expert

Dr Holly Powell-Jones is the founder of Online Media Law UK and a leading expert in digital safety, media law and young people. Her PhD investigates children's understandings of risk online. She works with schools, businesses, and universities to provide award-winning education on the criminal, legal and ethical considerations for the digital age. Visit OnlineMediaLaw.co.uk for more.



#WakeUpWednesday®

The National College®

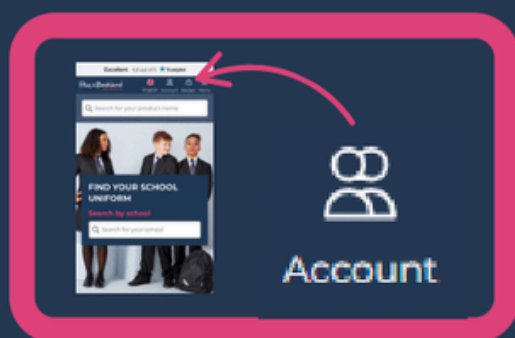
Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/take-news-and-scams>

NEW SCHOOL UNIFORM WEBSITE LAUNCH

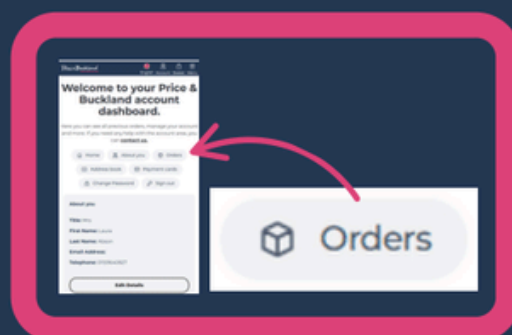
On the **11th** of February
we will launch our
NEW website.
The URL remains:
www.price-buckland.co.uk



Website QR code.
This will take you
to the homepage
to search for your
school



If you have ordered
from our website
before, go to the
Account Section and
re-set your password.
You can use the same
password that you
have currently.



You can then see
previous orders and
manage your
account.