



September

Welcome back to Hockliffe Lower School. It has been lovely to have the children back and of course to give a warm reception to our new starters, all of whom have settled in really well. We have had a busy start to the term at Hockliffe. The children have settled in very well and are engaging with new routines and expectations.

We'd like to welcome Mrs Scott and Mrs Jamal, who are teaching in Rowan class. They have both settled in really well.

We, as a team, have thoroughly enjoyed seeing the children's enjoyment in their learning since they have returned. Our aim, in all that we do, is to ensure our children are "Happily learning to succeed."

We look forward to an exciting term ahead.

Mrs Aoife Greaves

Headteacher

Values

At Hockliffe we are proud to be a Values School. It is this that determines the thinking and behaviour in school of all pupils and staff. Through our values we develop a positive culture for teaching and learning. This is based upon valuing ourselves, each other and the environment. Our School Values support the development of the whole child.

September's value is Responsibility. Responsibility is about being accountable and answerable for one's own actions, decisions, and their consequences, leading to personal growth, reliability, and trust in relationships. By fulfilling commitments and taking ownership of successes and failures, individuals can gain confidence, make meaningful choices, and actively create the life they desire.

Communication - Arbor App

At Hockliffe have replaced text message communications with In App Messages via the Arbor App. Please make sure that you have downloaded the App and enabled notifications on your device. Instructions to do this can be found [here](#). We use In-App messaging to send absence texts, short reminders as well as urgent messages.

We will be developing this further over the autumn term and teachers will begin to use this to share curriculum and class information rather than Google Classroom. There will be further information in the next newsletter.

Meerkat Awards

Every week, each teacher chooses a child in their class who has demonstrated one or more of our Meerkat learning behaviours. The behaviours we want to see are:

Motivation

Enquiring minds

Engaged in learning

Resourceful in learning

Knowledgeable in learning

Alert

Thoughtful

The child who shows these behaviours each week takes home the Meerkat and diary. It is great to see and read what the children have enjoyed doing over the weekend with their Meerkat.

Piano or Keyboard Lessons

Places are currently available for individual lessons during the school day. For further details please contact Valerie Stanbridge on 07450762628. During the year the children get the opportunity to show off their skills by performing in a concert for their parents and the other children in school.

Christmas Card Competition

Alex Mayer, Member of Parliament, would like to invite the children to take part in the annual Christmas Card Design Competition. The winning design will be made into a Christmas card. The children will bring home a template which needs to be returned to school by Wednesday 5th December. Please ensure details are entered clearly on the entry. Entries will not be returned.

ROCK STEADY

ROCK AND POP BAND LESSONS!

LEARN TO PLAY MUSIC. AMPLIFY CONFIDENCE.
Choose from: vocals, keyboard, drums, guitar or bass.

Inclusive and hassle-free!
Takes place in school. Instruments provided and no experience necessary!

Have fun and learn by playing!
Children work their way through a curriculum of up to 300 musical skills.

Taught by professional musicians
Rocksteady band leaders are highly trained musicians who make learning music fun.

Track more than music!
Improves wellbeing, confidence, social skills and academic achievement.

Progress at their own pace.
Your child can achieve an exam free, Ofqual regulated Trinity Music qualification.

End every term on a high note!
Watch your child shine as they perform in their end of term concerts.

A band for everyone

- Children learn to play an instrument in their very own band.
- Fun and inclusive in-school band lessons. No music theory involved.
- Follow their musical journey in your Blackboard account.
- Exam free. Ofqual regulated Trinity Music qualification.
- Instruments provided and no experience necessary.

BOOK ONLINE TO START LESSONS IN SEPTEMBER

0330 713 0330 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, Sat 10am-5pm, local time) rocksteadymusicschool.com

BOOK YOUR CHILD'S PLACE ONLINE

0203 103 0330 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, Sat 10am-5pm, local time) rocksteadymusicschool.com

TRINITY MUSIC SCHOOL OF HOCKLIFFE COLLEGE

Rocksteady

At Hockliffe, children have the opportunity to join a band. Every Friday the children, who have signed up, have the opportunity to work with other children to develop their music skills. The children work together to create a performance which is shared with the other children and parents towards the end of each term. If you would like your child to sign up please use the link below to find out more information.

<https://www.rocksteadymusicschool.com/info-for-parents/>

Reading

Over the coming weeks, children (except Willow Class) will be given a reading book that is appropriate to their level. In KS1, this will be a decodable Rhino Reader book, some children in KS2 will also have a Rhino Reader book. Your child's reading book will be changed on a regular basis by an adult in the class. **To make maximum progress, children should be reading fully decodable books. This means that the books children are given should match up exactly to the phonics that they have learned. Books shouldn't contain any letter sounds not yet taught. With fully decodable books, children can use their phonics skills to tackle every word and there's no need to rely on guesswork or clues from the pictures.** This helps them quickly gain confidence and feel successful when they read. Some of the older children may feel that they have mastered a book after one reading, we really encourage you to ensure they **read it at**

least 4 or 5 times. If your child is reading other books at home please do record this in their reading record so we can praise them for this.

Research shows that rereading ability appropriate books helps children to:

- 1. Improve Reading Comprehension Skills
- 2. Develop Vocabulary
- 3. Increase Reading Confidence
- 4. Increase Reading Fluency
- 5. Get to Grips with Plot, Characters and Themes
- 6. Develop a Love of Books

Children will also be able to take a book home from the library each week, this book doesn't need to be at their reading level. The aim is that this book is shared with the adults at home and will hopefully instil a love of reading and build the habit of reading for pleasure.

Primary Update

I wanted to take this opportunity to update parents regarding our conversion to a Primary School. Hockliffe Lower School and the Kingsbridge Educational Trust continue to be in discussion with Central Bedfordshire. The local authority are actively working on plans for transition to two tier. There is no timetable for the conversion at present. Parents of year 4 children will need to apply for Year 5 spaces at local Middle Schools through the Central Bedfordshire website.

Is your child due to start school in September 2026?

Open Morning (9.00 - 10.30) and Evening (6.00 - 7.00) 11th November 2025

Please contact the school office to book a slot.

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/admissions

Reading Afternoon

On Thursday 9th October we will be holding a reading afternoon. You will be able to spend some time reading with your child or with a small group of children in their learning environment. If there are any parents who would like to share their love of reading with a class or a group please get in touch. 2.30 - 3.

Harvest Collection

As part of our Harvest Celebration we will be collecting items for the Leighton Linlade Food Bank. If you would like to donate non-perishable food items, please bring them in during the week of 6th October and place them in the collection box on the playground.

Reminders

No nuts or nut products

Hockliffe Lower School continues to aim to be a 'nut free' environment. In the interests of protecting pupils with nut allergies, we request that you do not send your children to school with any of the following:

- Packaged nuts
- Peanut butter or chocolate spreads containing nuts
- Cereal, granola or chocolate bars containing nuts
- Cake or biscuits containing nuts
- Peanut-based sauces like satay
- Any food made with sesame seeds (which can cause a similar allergic reaction)
- Foods with coconut or coconut oil
- Suncream or creams containing nut products

The above list is not exhaustive. Please check the ingredient lists carefully, especially chocolate spreads.

Both children and adults with severe nut allergies can suffer from life-threatening reactions if they eat, smell, or touch any foods containing nuts. We are therefore grateful for your cooperation in helping to keep our pupils and staff safe.

Grapes

If you are sending grapes in for your child's lunch or snack please ensure these are cut into quarters as they are a choking hazard.

Parking

Please remember that our school is situated in a residential area. If you do need to use your car to travel to school you must ensure that you are parking your car legally and not blocking the driveways of the houses in the local area.

At drop off and pick up times the staff car park should be accessed by staff only unless access has been agreed with myself. This is to ensure that staff can park and start work promptly.

Mobile Phones

Please be aware that parents and visitors should not be using their mobile phone on the school site. This is for safeguarding reasons. If you appear to be using your mobile phone you will be asked by a member of staff to cease using it.

Play Equipment, bikes and scooters

The play equipment should not be used before and after school.

Bikes and scooters should not be used on the playground.

Attendance

Please ensure that your child attends school everyday. If your child is unwell and is unable to attend school please contact the school office on the morning of absence. Appointments such as doctor and dentist should be made out of school hours. For any absence other than sickness please ensure you complete a [leave of absence request](#).

Upcoming and recent Cultural and Religious Celebrations

Mawlid

Thu, 4 Sept 2025 – Fri, 5 Sept 2025

Mawlid, Mawlid al-Nabi al-Sharif or Eid Milad is the observance of the birthday of Islamic prophet Muhammad commemorated in the third month of the Islamic calendar and is considered to be an auspicious day amongst Muslims. Sunni Muslims observe the Prophet Muhammed's (also known as Mohammed or Muhammad) birthday on the 12th day of the Islamic month of Rabi' al-awwal, while Shi'a Muslims mark it on the 17th of this month. The history of this celebration goes back to the early days of Islam when some of the Tabi'un began to hold sessions in which poetry and songs composed to honour Muhammad were recited and sung to the crowds. How is it celebrated? Mawlid is celebrated in almost all Islamic countries, and in other countries that have a significant Muslim population. The only exceptions are Qatar and Saudi Arabia where it is not an official public holiday. Muslims commemorate this day by sending their blessings to Prophet Muhammad with recitations of praises and blessings (marhaban). Talks are held in mosques in conjunction with the occasion, and Muslim organisations commemorate the life history of the prophet's exemplary good character. In some countries large street processions are held and homes or mosques are decorated. Charity and food is distributed, and stories about the life of Muhammad are narrated with recitation of poetry by children. However, the main significance of these festivities is expression of love for Muhammad.

Eid Milad-Un-Nabi Mubarak!

Navratri

Mon, 22 Sept - Wed, 1 Oct Navratri also spelled Navaratri; also called Durga Puja, in Hinduism is a major festival held in honour of the divine feminine. Navaratri spans nine nights (and ten days) and is celebrated every year in the autumn. There are four similar festivals, also called Navratri, which are held at various stages of the year; however, the early autumn festival is the most significant. The festival is associated with the prominent battle that took place between Durga and demon Mahishasura and celebrates the victory of Good over Evil. These nine days are solely dedicated to Goddess Durga and her nine Avatars - the Navadurga. Each day is associated with an incarnation of the goddess. Moreover, there is a distinct food and colour significance attached to each day of Navratri.

Navratri is celebrated differently in India's various regions. For many people it is a time of religious reflection and fasting; for others it is a time for dancing and feasting.

In Northern India Navratri is celebrated by giving gifts, in the form of sweets or clothes whilst in Western India the festival is celebrated with the Garba and Dandiya-Raas dance. In south India, Navratri is the time to invite friends, relatives and neighbours over to look at the Kolu, which is essentially an exhibition of various dolls and figurines. In Eastern India Navratri is celebrated as Durga Puja. These five days of puja are meant for rest, family and going to different Durga puja pandals, each with a different theme and vibe, and of course, a gorgeous & life-sized idol of the goddess Durga. The Navratri festival also starts the preparation for one of the most important and widely celebrated holidays, Diwali.

Happy Navratri!

Join Home-Start Bedfordshire

Right now, a family with young children in your community struggles alone with sickness, disability, mental ill-health, isolation, bereavement, and more. You can make a lasting difference in their lives. You don't need any special qualifications, just real-life experience caring for children. You just need a couple of hours available on a weekday, once a week. The time is flexible to suit you.

Our local volunteers are parents, grandparents, and caregivers from all walks of life who want to help others. Join us today because childhood can't wait. Visit www.home-startbedfordshire.org.uk and get in touch. We would love to speak to you!



flu: 5 reasons to vaccinate your child



1. Protect your child

The vaccine will help protect your child against flu and serious complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia

2. Protect you, your family and friends

Vaccinating your child will help protect more vulnerable friends and family

3. No injection needed

The nasal spray is painless and easy to have

4. It's better than having flu

The nasal spray helps protect against flu, has been given to millions of children worldwide and has an excellent safety record

5. Avoid costs

If your child gets flu, you may have to take time off work or arrange alternative childcare

Most children have the nasal spray vaccine which is the preferred vaccine. A vaccine injection is also available which does not contain gelatine from pigs (porcine gelatine).

For more information visit
www.nhs.uk/child-flu

Flu **i**mmunisation
Helping to protect children, every winter

<p>September</p> <p>1st & 2nd Training Days no children</p> <p>3rd Children return to school</p> <p>4th Spanish Club starts 3.15-4.15</p> <p>11th Curriculum Orienteering Day (all classes during school time, wear trainers)</p> <p>16th Young leaders Training Yr 4 PE kit during school day</p> <p>16th Big BASH (be active stay healthy) Yr 3 & 4 PE kit lunchtime</p> <p>16th Road Safety assembly</p> <p>16th Maple new parents evening 3.15 – 4.15 School Hall attend with your children</p> <p>17th Rowan new parents evening 3.15 – 4.15 School Hall attend with your children</p> <p>18th Individual Photographs</p> <p>18th Willow new parents evening 3.15 – 4.15 School Hall attend with your children</p> <p>23rd Young leaders Training Yr 4 PE kit during school day</p> <p>23rd Big BASH (be active stay healthy) Yr 3 & 4 PE kit lunchtime</p> <p>24th Mental Health Support Team assembly</p> <p>26th European Languages Day (Activity Spanish Activity Lesson £3 per child HSA funding half.)</p> <p>30th Young leaders Training Yr 4 PE kit during school day</p> <p>30th Big BASH (be active stay healthy) Yr 3 & 4 PE kit</p>	<p>5th International Day of Charity</p> <p>5th Mawlid</p> <p>6th National Read a Book Day</p> <p>8th International Literacy Day</p> <p>13th Roald Dahl Day</p> <p>13th World First Aid Day</p> <p>15th International Day of Democracy</p> <p>21st International Day of Peace</p> <p>21st World Gratitude Day</p> <p>22nd – 1st Oct Navratri</p> <p>23rd International Day of Sign Language</p> <p>23rd -24th Rosh Hashanah</p> <p>26th European Day of Languages</p> <p>28th – 2nd Oct Durga Puja</p>
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<p>October</p> <p>6th- 10th Walktober – families encouraged to walk (scoot or cycle) all or part of the way to school.</p> <p>9th Reading Afternoon 2.30 – 3.10 (parents or grandparents)</p> <p>20th – 24th Be Bright Be Seen (safety assembly in school for children)</p> <p>22nd HSA Spooky cake sale (on playground 3.15 - 50p per cake cash, children attending After School Club will be brought across)</p> <p>23rd Run 4 Fun KS1 & KS 2 Astral Park (which group attends to be confirmed depending on numbers we are allowed to enter)</p> <p>24th HSA non uniform and dance (during the school day)</p>	<p>ADHD Awareness Month</p> <p>Black History Month</p> <p>Downs Syndrome Awareness Month</p> <p>2nd Yom Kippur</p> <p>2nd Gandhi Jayanti</p> <p>3rd National Poetry Day</p> <p>3rd World Smile Day</p> <p>4th St Francis' Day</p> <p>4th – 10th World Space Week</p> <p>5th World Teacher day</p> <p>6th World Cerebral Palsy Day</p> <p>6th – 12th Dyslexia Awareness Week</p> <p>7th – 13th Sukkot</p> <p>9th World Sight Day</p> <p>10th World Mental Health Day</p> <p>14th Aida Lovelace Day</p> <p>18th World Singing Day</p> <p>20th Diwali</p> <p>25th International Artist Day</p> <p>31st Halloween</p>
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