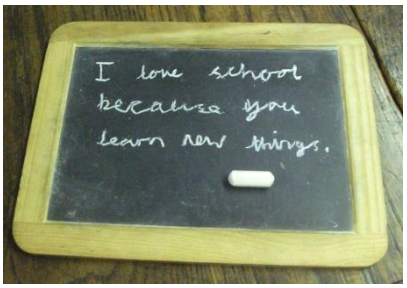

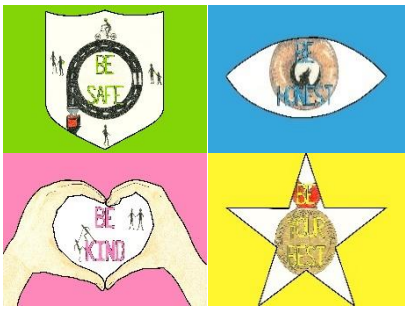

HIGH FIRS PRIMARY SCHOOL

PROSPECTUS

Achieving More Together

Headteacher: Mr A Kilbride

COURT CRESCENT,
SWANLEY, KENT, BR8 8NR
Telephone: 01322 669721
e-mail: office@high-firs.kent.sch.uk
Website: www.high-firs.kent.sch.uk

Particulars of this document are correct up to the time of distribution. Certain particulars will be revised when necessary. It should not be assumed that there will be no change affecting these particulars before the start of or during the year in question or in relation to subsequent years.

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HEADTEACHER'S WELCOME

Dear Parents

Thank you for your interest in our school.

OUR VISION STATEMENT
At High Firs Primary School we endeavour to ensure that our pupils are happy, safe and successful. We are committed to giving every individual child the skills to develop their talents, whatever they may be, by having very high expectations of all our children.

We are dedicated to helping children achieve their full potential whatever their ability. We are also committed to providing opportunities for everyone to participate and excel in a wide range of Extended Schools' activities.

It is our belief that in an interactive, stimulating, fun and attractive environment children will develop a love for learning as well as a respect for other individuals and the world around them. We encourage children to develop a growing sense of moral responsibility, good citizenship & an understanding of their role within the community and the value of a healthy lifestyle. We recognise the important contribution that parents & carers play in their children's learning and by working in partnership we can all achieve more together.

Our aim is to enable the children in our school to become confident, independent and creative individuals who are well prepared to meet their future challenges.

OUR SCHOOL VALUES
The school has a set of four values to guide school life and behaviours, helping us achieve our warm and positive ethos. These are displayed around the school and are frequently referred to

COME TO VISIT US!
We are extremely proud of our school. We are very committed to the partnership between home & school and all prospective parents are invited to visit the school, to have a look around and meet the staff & children. Please contact the School Office to arrange an appointment; we look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Kilbride
Headteacher

Ofsted GRADED GOOD

High Firs Primary School: Achieving More Together

All members of the school's community are committed to living up to the school's vision of "Achieving More Together" (Ofsted 2018)

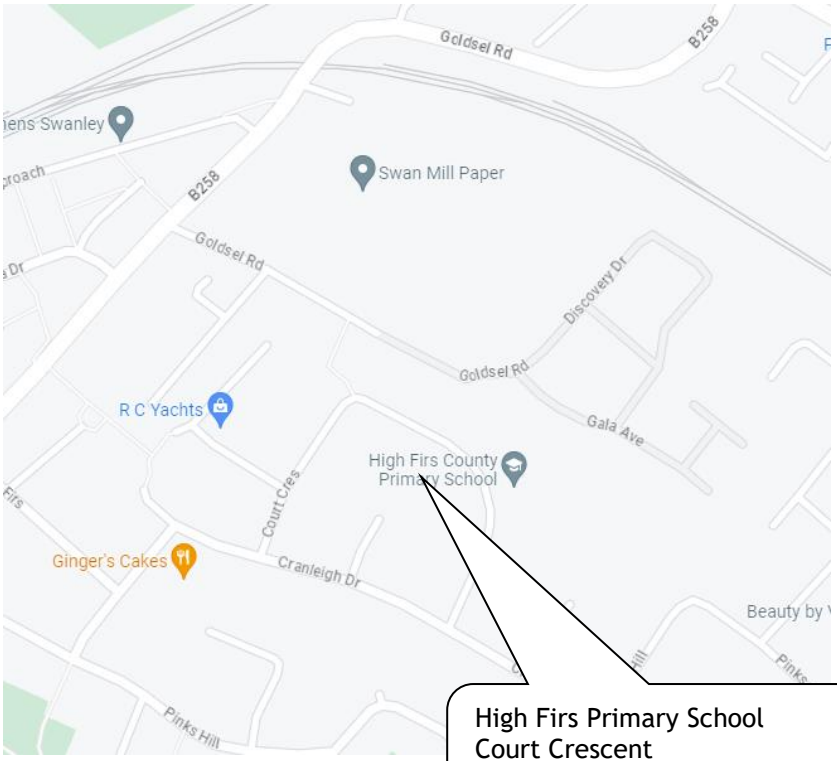
OUR SCHOOL

High Firs Primary School is a popular one-form entry Community Primary School for boys and girls aged between 4+ and 11 years (number on roll: 210). The school is set in an attractive estate off Goldsel Road in Swanley. The school is easily reached from the main road by a series of paths between the houses and linking roads for ease of access.

The school is set in pleasant surroundings with shrubs and trees. The children have a playground, with opportunities for both games and quieter activities, and an adjoining playing field which they use for both playtime and PE. Our grounds have been enhanced by the development of a woodland area into an exciting outdoor learning area for our Forest School activities.

In addition to woodland adventures, our children are now benefitting from Tilly, our school dog and lessons for younger children in bike riding as well as swimming for three year groups. We pride ourselves in our provision that is designed to cater for a wide range of different learning styles and character types, such that our school genuinely feels like one big, happy family.

High Firs is supported by both our Governing Body and the Friends of High Firs Primary School Association. Pupils are well supported by parents, and we are very proud of the standards of behaviour set at the school.



High Firs Primary School
Court Crescent
Swanley
Kent BR8 8NR

OUR STAFF

Staff… are proud to work at the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils feel valued and know that every member of staff will listen to them. (Ofsted 2018)

Headteacher: Mr A Kilbride

Deputy Headteacher/SENCO: Miss C Rennie

Class Teachers
Reception – Mrs L Everest
1 – Mrs T O'Dwyer & Miss N Durrant
2 – Mrs R Ford
3 – Miss L Adams
4 – Mrs E Payne
5 – Miss R Selby
6 – Miss A Allin
Mrs E Bridle (Class cover)
Mrs E Allen

Teaching Assistants
Ms C Dedu
Miss P Kelly
Mrs D McCullough
Mrs E Miles
Mrs S Phipps
Mrs L Spokes
Mrs E Walford
Mrs J Boreham
Miss K Johnson
Mrs L Rekstiene
Miss S Hoskins
Miss K Robinson

PE and Forest School
Mrs J Verge

Music
Mrs S Jarvis

French
Mrs L Ives

Our Pupils Say…
[We] enjoy school because all the teachers are "friendly, positive and funny!"
(Ofsted 2018)

Pastoral Care/FamilyLiaison
Mrs T Kumah

Midday Supervisors
Miss T Morgan
Mrs A Warner
Mrs T Kumah
Mrs S Thackray
Mrs S Lindsay
Mrs D Brown
Miss A Sunday
Mrs L Schott
Mrs S Demings
Mrs V Roy
Miss M Bailey

Our Parents Say…
Every member of staff always puts the children first and are always happy to help.
(Yr4 parent)

Principals Catering
Miss T Perkins
Miss J Corcoran

Premises Staff
Miss M Mewes
Mr G Harris

Office Administrators
Mrs E Barnett
Mrs S Loftus
Mrs G Windget

SAFEGUARDING

[The school] have created a culture of safeguarding in the school in which pupils' well-being is at the heart of everything you do. (Ofsted 2018)

Our school is committed to the welfare and safeguarding of our children. If you have any concerns, please speak in confidence to one of our Designated Safeguarding Leads – Mr A Kilbride, Miss C Rennie, Miss A Allin & Miss R Selby. A link to report any concerns can also be found on our website at https://www.high-firs.kent.sch.uk/safeguarding

OUR GOVERNING BODY

School Governors are people from the school's community who wish to make a positive contribution to children's education. Governors are the largest volunteer force in the county and play an important part in raising school standards through their three key roles of:
* Setting strategic direction
* Ensuring accountability
* Monitoring and evaluating school performance.
If you wish to contact any member of the Governing Body please do so via the School Office.

Our governors are:

Headteacher Governor - Mr A Kilbride
Staff Governor - Miss C Rennie
Parent Governors - Ms L Scheuermann, Mrs J Barnes
Co-opted Governors - Ms E Mayle, Mr J Kent
Chair of Governors - Mr S Geary
Clerk to Governors – KCC Clerking Service

THE SCHOOL DAY

8.45am - 8.55am	Start of School Day
9.00am – 10.30am	Session 1
10.30am – 10.45am	Breaktime
10.45am – 12.00pm	Session 2
12.00pm - 1.00pm	Lunchtime and playtime
1.00pm – 3.15pm	Session 3
3.15pm	End of School Day

Excluding assemblies and break times, the school day allows approximately 24 hours teaching time per week.

Our Parents Say…
The children are welcomed at the gate every morning; it is lovely how all children are greeted.
(Yr2 parent)

Beginning the School Day
Children come into school in the mornings via the pedestrian gate and go straight into their classroom from 8.45am. Parents are asked to ensure that their child does not arrive at school before 8.45am unless they are attending Breakfast Club or another school activity.

If you do need to drop your child off at school before 8.45am, Foots Cray Out of School run a thriving Breakfast Club in the school hall. Children need to arrive between 7.30am and 8.15am. Foots Cray Out of School also run an After-School Club from 3.15pm to 6.15pm every day. Please see p32 for more information.

Breaktimes
The midday break is supervised by our school meal supervisors who divide their time between the dining and play areas. We also have members of staff who are available to provide pastoral support at break times and lunchtimes for our youngest children, as they settle into school routines or for other children requiring additional support during the lunch time. A teacher and a minimum of three other adults supervise each playtime break. On wet days, children are supervised inside the school building.

School Meals and Packed Lunches
Children in all classes at High Firs may choose whether to have a school meal at lunchtime or a packed lunch provided by home.
Packed lunches may be brought from home in a clearly named small plastic box or lunch bag (nothing too large please due to storage implications!). We promote healthy lunches so please do not include chocolate bars, sweets or fizzy drinks. Due to severe allergies in school we are a "nut free school" and do ask for parent support in not sending in any nut or peanut-based products please.

Our school meals are provided by Principals Catering on behalf of Kent County Council. A traditional hot meal or vegetarian option is available along with a desert.
All our children in KS1 are eligible to receive a FREE school lunch. Our catering team require lunches to be ordered by parents in advance (before 9am on the day) using their website - https://chandco.myschoolmealorders.com/.

Children in KS2 may also choose whether to have a school meal or a packed lunch from home. The current charge for children in KS2 is £2.67 per meal. Our catering team require lunches to be ordered and paid for by parents in advance (before 9am on the day) using their website - https://chandco.myschoolmealorders.com/.

In certain cases, free meals are also available to those in receipt of Income Support. Details are available from KCC or the link on our website; you will need to complete a confidential on-line form to claim these. Children who are in receipt of free school meals in KS2 are also entitled to £1455 additional funding in 2023 – 2024 to meet their individual needs in school. Pupils in KS1 may also claim this funding if they meet the criteria.

Water is always available at lunchtime, as well as during the day when the children can drink from their own water bottles. These water bottles can be purchased via the school office.

Currently fruit is provided by the Government, free of charge, for all our KS1 children at break times. Milk is also available for our 4 year old children.

End of the School Day
Parents can enter the school site at 3.10pm and the children can be collected from 3.15pm from set points around the school grounds, depending on their class. Parents are requested to collect their youngest child first.

We request that children in Years R to 4 are collected by someone over 18 and that these adults are identified on your child's "Collection Arrangements" form. Children in Years 5 & 6 are allowed to walk home without an adult providing the school has the written permission of their parents. Children in Years 5 & 6 may cycle to school if they have passed their Kent Safe Rider test. Secure cycle storage is available for these children to store their bikes during the school day. We also allow parents of younger children to bring their children to school on scooters and bikes which can also be stored securely until the end of the school day.

Teachers will not allow a child to leave the school premises unless it is with an adult that is known to them (or if permission to walk alone has been given). Parents should let the class teacher know in writing via the Home-School Contact Book if someone other than usual will be collecting their child on a particular day.

Please ensure that your child is collected promptly at the end of the school day; it can be very distressing for a child to be the one 'left behind'. Children who are collected late will need to be signed out at the office; this will be monitored as part of our attendance procedures.

Attendance, Punctuality and Holidays
Over a school year, pupils are required to attend school for 190 days (380 sessions) and the majority of our children have very good attendance records.
We work closely with the KCC Attendance and Inclusion Service's School Liaison Officer to look at and deal with issues of school attendance. Where absences are linked to illness or medical concerns the School Nursing Service may also be involved by the school.

The school operates a "Late Book" system, parents are required to give a reason whenever a pupil is late into school and this is noted, along with the time of arrival. School begins at 8.55am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at this time. Any pupil who arrives at school after 8.55am will be considered to be late. An 'L' will be entered into the register. Any pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked with a 'U' in the register and this will be classified as an unauthorised absence. Children who are collected late from school will be signed out. A record of these incidences is kept and frequent occurrences will be followed up.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, further action may be taken, including a meeting with the Headteacher or representatives from the Governing Body to discuss & explain the frequent late arrival in school of their children. Please ensure, therefore, that your children arrive in school at the appropriate time.

We are also very concerned about children who have considerable amounts of absence from school. They miss areas of learning in the curriculum, which has an adverse effect on child's learning and progress.
When your child is absent, you need to contact the school by 9.30am on the first day of absence and then keep us updated until your child returns to school. Where no satisfactory reason is given for the child's absence, then the absence will not be authorised by the school. This may then result in the Attendance Service's School Liaison Officer being involved to deal with these absences.

An audit of registers is undertaken weekly and this further identifies causes for concern regarding the number of sessions children have been absent. This also includes monitoring of linked sibling absences or other patterns of absence, such as days of the week. These will then be followed up with the parents either by the school and/or the KCC School Liaison Officer.

Where a child has **10 sessions (5 days)** or more of unauthorised absence (for whatever reason) during any **100 sessions (50 days)** Kent County Council are able to action a penalty notice to be served on parents. The unauthorised term time leave does not have to be consecutive for a parent to receive a penalty notice. Penalty notices will be actioned for periods of unauthorised absence, following the clear guidelines set out by Kent County Council. Should the penalty notice remain unpaid or have been paid only in part at the end of the 28 day period Kent County Council can instigate legal proceedings against the parents. Any money secured via the serving of penalty notices does NOT go to the school; this is retained by Kent County Council.

The main impact for this is likely to be on parents who take their children on holiday in term-time. All requests for holiday leave are considered individually by the Headteacher but will only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances; the Swanley cluster of schools has established a protocol on attendance issues, which provides for such absences only to be authorised in very exceptional circumstances. If a holiday is taken without the school's permission, or the child fails to return on the agreed date, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a penalty notice can be issued. Please, therefore, do consider very carefully before booking or requesting holiday leave of absence in term-time.

Please note that all requests for absence and reasons for absence should be made in writing to the School Office and not written in the Home-School Contact Book.

Children who are collected late from school at the end of the day should be collected from the Office, where parents will be required to sign their child out as a late collection in the Late Book. These incidences are also monitored and followed up as necessary by the school and/or Attendance Service.

Good attendance and punctuality are actively promoted across the school - the KS1 & KS2 classes with the highest attendance rate each week wins the "Register Rabbit" and our termly winners receive a whole-class treat. Individual children with 100% attendance are rewarded with a certificate at the end of each full term and academic year.

Visitors
Our school is a busy place! We receive invaluable help in school from many parents and members of the local community, as well as welcoming the inevitable deliveries and visitors that are part of school life.

For the health and safety of the whole school community, all visitors should access the school via the Office entrance. Those visitors remaining on the school premises are asked to sign in the Visitors' Book and to wear a Visitor's Badge. In this way, the number of people on the premises can be monitored and we are able to identify those onsite.

Parking and Road Safety
High Firs School is situated in a residential area. Illegal & thoughtless parking causes great concern to the local community and the safety of our children is of paramount importance. Please keep the entrance & zigzag lined areas of the road clear at all times and keep private driveways clear out of courtesy to our neighbours. It is illegal to park on the double yellow lines outside the school. Please do consider the safety of our children. We work very closely with the Sevenoaks council parking wardens and the local police to continue to support safe parking around the school. We also offer a popular 'Park and Stride' facility where children are collected by school staff before the start of the day and returned there in the afternoon. Please see our website for further information about this.

Safer School Zones' have been introduced close to primary schools in Swanley to tackle dangerous and inconsiderate parking. Sevenoaks District Council has teamed up with Kent County Council to introduce the Zones following calls from parents, schools and neighbours to improve safety and traffic flow during the busy drop-off and pick up times. Areas around schools with school 'Keep clear' areas, lollypop crossing locations and yellow lines will be designated as 'Safer School Zones' and stopping or parking will not be allowed. Highly visible 'Safer School Zone' signs have been put up at the approaches and exits to the Zones. Enforcement Officers will carry out extra patrols and will issue an immediate fine if they see a vehicle stopping or parking in a 'Safer School Zone'. This is now in force at High Firs.

The school's car park is for staff and visitors only at all times - when leaving or collecting your children, or visiting the school, please do not drive into the school car park or park on our driveway. Please also park with consideration for our neighbours and use the designated parking bays in the surrounding roads.

STARTING SCHOOL – RECEPTION CLASS

Admission to the Reception Class
When offering places, the guidelines set by KCC must be strictly adhered to. Parents' wishes are taken into account but with reference to the following priorities:

1. Children in Local Authority Care
2. Current family association, i.e. sibling in the school at the time of entry, where the family continue to live at the same address as when the sibling was admitted.
4. Health and Special Access reasons.
5. Nearness of children's homes and ease of access to schools (distances are computer-calculated via straight lines on a map).

Our Parents Say…
The information given prior to starting was excellent - very thorough and informative.
(Reception parent)

You need to apply by completing a Reception Common Application Form (RCAF). You can apply online at **www.kent.gov.uk/ola** or you can request a paper based form and booklet from the Local Authority. You can return the form, either to one of the schools (who will send it on) or directly to the LA's Primary Admissions Team. It is not possible to acknowledge receipt of your form due to the large volume of applications that are received, so it may be wise to send the form by registered or recorded delivery. Please ensure that you meet the deadline set.

If you are applying online, don't forget to tick the Terms and Conditions box and press the submit button to ensure that your application will be processed. Once this has been done, provided you have given an email address, you will receive an email providing you with a copy of the information you have submitted - you should check this information and amend it if necessary.

Kent's co-ordinated admissions scheme is what is called an **Equal Preference** scheme: it makes sure that everyone who completes an RCAF (Reception Common Application Form) is offered one place. Parents are invited to name up to three schools on the RCAF, in order of preference, putting the one they would most like first. All applications are considered and the children are ranked against the admission criteria described earlier; the school will use this if it receives too many requests for the places that it has available. The school will not take account of whether you name the school as your first, second or third preference. Once the school has ranked the children, we will return our lists to the Local Authority (Kent County Council). The LA will then enter your child into a computer system that will allocate the children to those schools who have ranked them within their published admission number. If more than one school can offer you a place, you will be offered whichever of them you named highest on your list of preferences. If only one school can offer you a place, that is the school that will be offered to you. If none of the schools you want can offer a place, you will be offered the nearest vacant place to your child's home address. This is to make sure every child has the offer of a place.

Parents will be notified in late Spring with the offer of one school place; this is via first-class post or email depending on the method of application.

Parents need to let the school know in writing within a month if they do not want the place that has been offered. This will allow schools to re-offer any spaces that come up. You should not turn down a place unless you know that you will not need it; accepting it will not reduce your chance of getting a late vacancy or stop you appealing for a place somewhere else.

If you didn't get the school you wanted, you can ask any school you named on your RCAF to put your child's name on their waiting list. You should do this as soon as possible because after a set date schools will re-offer any vacant places they have.

A good place to start finding out about getting your child into primary school is to read the **Kent Admission to Primary School** booklet which is published every year and which can be downloaded from www.kent.gov.uk The procedures may change every year so please read it carefully, as it will tell you everything you need to know about the admissions process.

Even if you already have an older child at the school, you **MUST** still apply for a place for your younger child. You will not automatically receive a place because of a sibling link.

Further information about Reception admissions, and links to the Kent website, www.kent.gov.uk, are available on our school website.

Information before application

We welcome all prospective parents who wish to visit the school before applying for a place for their child; please contact the School Office for an appointment.

Parents with children starting in Reception are invited to the school in the year preceding their child's entry; an informal meeting and tour is held to tell you about the school in the Autumn Term and there is an opportunity for you to ask questions. This is followed later in the year by an open craft & play session for children and parents.

Our Parents Say…
The settling-in sessions in the Summer Term and home visits were an excellent way of children getting to know their new environment, teachers and school friends.
(Reception parent)

Visits for new starters
Once your place for Reception is confirmed we have an established pattern of visits in the Summer Term to help your child get to know their new school and school staff. As well as an afternoon to play in their new classroom, we also hold a "Teddy Bears Picnic" and school staff undertake home visits to meet children & parents. School staff also undertake meetings with pre-school staff to ensure a smooth transition for your child.

Our Parents Say…
The initial half-days helped my child to settle very quickly into school life.
(Reception parent)

The first few weeks
In the days prior to your child joining us, you will be invited to book a slot for their Baseline assessment. This is a short, task-based assessment which is not used to label or track individual pupils. The data is used at the end of Year 6 to form the school-level progress measure.
On your child's first day with their full class, please take your child to their classroom at the start of their school day; parents are then invited to join us for "Tea and Tissues" in the school hall. We find that the children usually settle very well to their new environment – the parents can find it harder so this is a good opportunity to relax and chat!

For the first few days of term in the Reception Class attendance is for mornings only; starting school for the first time brings with it new routines, social situations and new experiences which can be very tiring. Parents are invited to join the children in their classroom an afternoon soon after their first full day for "Pop in and Play".

It is a great help, particularly to the children's confidence, if by the time they come to school they are able to:

- Understand and obey simple instructions.
- Use the toilet without assistance.
- Dress and undress themselves.
- Write & recognise their own names.
- Use cutlery when eating their lunch.

Reception staff will be available at the end of each day if you have any concerns about your child's start to school life.

STARTING SCHOOL – CLASSES OTHER THAN RECEPTION

If you want your child to join High Firs other than at the usual age for admission (ie into our Reception Class), please contact the School Office to enquire if there are available places in your child's year group. If there are places available, we will then give you the information on how to go ahead in applying for a place. Further information about admissions, and links to the Kent website, www.kent.gov.uk, are available on our school website.

TRANSFER TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

At eleven, children transfer to local secondary schools. Applications for this are made by parents using the Kent Secondary Common Application Form, in line with the KCC guidelines as appropriate for that application period. Parents are also able to opt into the Kent Grammar Schools selection procedure. Applications can also be made to Bexley and Bromley Schools, but all choices will need to be put on the SCAF, whatever Local Authority the school comes under. Parents of Year 6 children are informed of the arrangements & possibilities for secondary transfer and the Secondary Schools hold open sessions & open

evenings at this time too. Brochures are available direct from local Secondary Schools. Further information about admissions, and links to the Kent website, www.kent.gov.uk, are available on our school website.

Our nearest local secondary school is Orchards Academy, Swanley.

In recent years, our pupils have moved on to the following schools:
Orchards Academy, Wilmington Grammar School for Boys, Wilmington Grammar School for Girls, Dartford Grammar School for Boys, Dartford Grammar School for Girls, Kemnal Technology College, St Olave's, The Leigh Academy, Longfield Academy, Knole Academy, Wilmington Academy, BETHS Grammar School and Dartford Science & Technology College

CARING FOR THE WHOLE CHILD

Our Parents Say…
There is a lovely, personal feel to the school. We love the fact all the teachers make such an effort with all the children and know their names, even when not in their class.
(Yr2 parent)

Personal Development and Well-being

The school places a high value on nurturing children's confidence and self-esteem. The children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and respect for others, and to develop good relationships with each other and with adults. Our children's thorough enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average rates of attendance.

Class Organisation

There are 209 children currently on roll. There are 7 classes organised into Key Stages by year group and with a maximum of 30 children in each class:

Early Years & KS ONE	Reception	4-5 years old
Key Stage ONE	Year 1	5-6 years old
Key Stage ONE	Year 2	6-7 years old
Key Stage TWO	Year 3	7-8 years old
Key Stage TWO	Year 4	8-9 years old
Key Stage TWO	Year 5	9-10 years old
Key Stage TWO	Year 6	10-11 years old

Our Parents Say…
The school is a safe and happy environment for our child.
(Yr4 parent)

Classes are supported by our invaluable team of Teaching Assistants, who support the children's learning individually and in small groups. A TA may be assigned to a particular child where provision has been identified to meet their Additional Educational Needs. We are very proud of the high levels of TA coverage that are given to our classes and the quality of support that they give.

Our Children Say…
The adults always help us to learn even if we don't understand something.
(Yr5 pupil)

We also have TAs who are trained in developing Speech & Language programmes, physical management and dyslexia to support our children in these areas as well as a Pastoral TA. Our TAs also have designated hours for supporting children with Additional Educational Needs, English as an Additional Language or Pupil Premium funding.

All children are placed in a 'house'. The children are given 'house points' as rewards and may participate in events such as intra-house sports competitions over the year. The house teams are:

Beech (Yellow)
Oak (Green)
Ash (Blue)
Chestnut (Red)

Our Parents Say…
[We] truly value that each child is seen as an individual, both educationally and on a personal level.
(Yr1 parent)

Children's Progress
We aim for the highest achievements from the children and to do this our teachers regularly monitor each child closely. Formal and informal assessments are used to identify areas for which a child may need extra help. We ask for parents' support in hearing children read on a daily basis at home and help with the learning of tables and spellings. Home Learning is set for all children and all children are expected to complete this and return to school as requested. Support is put in place for the learning needs of all children as identified.

CARING FOR THE WHOLE CHILD - Special Needs

Our Parents Say…
The school is very good at promoting inclusiveness and promoting a supportive environment amongst peers.
(Yr2 parent)

Our SENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator) is Miss C Rennie. We believe in participation for all; we aim to create a learning environment which is flexible enough to meet the needs of all members of our school community. At different times in their school career, a child or young person may have a special educational need. The Code of Practice defines SEN as:

"A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they:

(a) have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age: or
(b) have a disability which prevents or hinders them from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions."

If a learner is identified as having SEN, we will provide provision that is 'additional to or different from' the normal differentiated curriculum, intended to overcome the barrier to their learning but alongside their peers.

Our Parents Say…
The school meets all the needs of my child.
(Yr4 parent)

Learners can fall behind in school for lots of reasons. They may have been absent from school, they may have attended lots of different schools and not had a consistent opportunity to learn. They may not speak English very well or at all; they may be worried about different things that distract them from learning. At High Firs Primary school we are committed to ensuring that all learners have access to learning opportunities, and for those who are at risk of not learning, we will intervene. This does not mean that all vulnerable learners have SEN. Only those with a learning difficulty that requires special educational provision will be identified as having SEN.

Our SEN profile in 2023-24 shows that we have approximately 25% of children identified as having SEN; 2% of pupils have an Education & Health Care Plan.
Of these pupils, SEN were categorised as follows (some children may represent in more than one aspect, therefore % does not equal 100):

Our Parents Say…
The school has really supported my child and has helped us on our journey for extra support.
(Yr2 parent)

Speech and Language & Communication Difficulties – 46%
Identified Learning Difficulties – 36%
Moderate Learning Difficulties – 6%
Social & Emotional Difficulties – 17%
Autistic Spectrum / ADHD – 42%
Hearing Impairment – 2%
Physical / Medical needs – 20%

Assessing SEN at High Firs Primary School

Class Teachers, support staff, parents/carers or the learner themselves may be the first to notice a difficulty with learning. At High Firs Primary School we ensure that assessment of educational needs directly involves the learner, their parents/carer and of course their teacher. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) will also support with the identification of barriers to learning.

For some learners we may want to seek advice from specialist teams. In our school we have our own commissioned Speech & Language therapist, Educational Psychologist and Family Worker, as well as access to services universally provided by Kent County Council, which are described on the Local Offer website.

Our teachers and team of Teaching Assistants deliver the interventions to support learning – these are identified in the provision map as discussed by the class teacher and co-ordinated by our SENCO; many of our TAs are trained in specialist areas to ensure the best support we can give for our pupils.

What we do to Support Learners with SEN at High Firs Primary School

Every teacher is required to adapt the curriculum to ensure access to learning for all children in their class, regardless of ability or need. The Teachers Standards 2012 detail the expectations of all teachers, and we at High Firs Primary are proud of our teachers and their development of support for all learners.

Our Parents Say…
My child has been given lots of extra support when they have struggled with their learning.
(Yr4 parent)

Our teachers will use various strategies to adapt access to the curriculum, this might include using:

- Visual timetables
- Writing frames
- ICT or other alternative recording devices
- Peer buddy systems
- Positive behaviour rewards system
- Special programmes

Our Parents Say…
The school deals well with the individual needs of pupils.
(Yr1 parent)

Each learner identified as having SEN, is entitled to support that is 'additional to or different from' a normal differentiated curriculum. The type of support is dependent on the individual learning needs, and is intended to enable access to learning and overcome the barrier to learning identified. This support is described on a provision map, which details the interventions and actions that we undertake to support learners. We modify the provision map regularly, and it changes frequently, as our learners and their needs change. This information is shared with parents and school staff, as well as the children themselves, to ensure everyone is involved.

Our staff share knowledge and expertise so we can learn from each other, and demonstrate what we offer for learners with SEN. We are also able to promote consistent practice across all the schools in our local area cluster ensuring equality of opportunity. All staff receive training in supporting children with special needs and we also have staff who specialise in particular areas; for example Dyslexia, Sensory Circuits, Emotional Wellbeing, and ASD.

A summary provision map is also shared with Governors who are able to ensure that we monitor the impact of these interventions on learning across the school.

Funding for SEN
High Firs Primary school receives funding directly to the school from the Local Authority to support the needs of learners with SEN. The amount of funding we received for 2023-24 is £66,210 - the majority of this funding is assigned to support staffing for identified children.

Sevenoaks & Swanley schools are committed to working together to improve learning for all, and we are able to share resources, training and moderate provision for learners with SEN.

How do we know this support is effective?
Monitoring progress is an integral part of teaching and leadership within our school. Parents/carers, pupils and staff are involved in reviewing the impact of interventions for learners with SEN. We follow the 'assess, plan, do, review' model and ensure that parents/carers and children are involved in each step. Before any additional provision is selected to help a child, the SENCO, Teacher, parent/carer and learner, agree what they expect to be different following this intervention. A baseline will also be recorded, which can be used to compare the impact of the provision.

Children, parents/carers and their teaching and support staff will be directly involved in reviewing progress. This review can be built in to the intervention itself, or it can be a formal meeting held at least once a term, where we all discuss progress and next steps. If a learner has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHC plan) the same termly review conversations take place, but the EHC plan will also be formally reviewed annually.

The SENCO collates the impact data of interventions, to ensure that we are only using interventions that work.

Progress data of all learners is collated by the whole school and monitored by teachers, senior leaders and governors. Our school and local data is also monitored by the Local Authority and Ofsted.

Other Opportunities for Learning
All learners should have the same opportunity to access extra curricular activities. At High Firs Primary school we offer a wide range of additional clubs and activities, which change termly.

We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to ensure participation for all.

All staff at High Firs Primary school have regular training on the Equality Act 2010. This legislation places specific duties on schools, settings and providers including the duty not to discriminate, harass or victimise a child or adult linked to a protected characteristic defined in the Equality Act and to make 'reasonable adjustments.'

The Equality Act 2010 definition of disability is:
"A person has a disability for the purposes of this Act if (s)he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to day activities."
Section 1(1) Disability Discrimination Act 1995

This definition of disability in the Equality Act includes children with long term health conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and cancer. Children and young people with such conditions do not necessarily have SEN, but there is a significant overlap between disabled children and young people and those with SEN. Children and young people may therefore be covered by both SEN and disability legislation.

Our Parents Say…
Preparation going into the new school year is fantastic.
(Yr1 parent)

Preparing for the next step
Transition is a part of life for all learners. This can be transition to a new class in school, having a new teacher, or moving on to another school, training provider or moving in to employment. High Firs Primary school is committed to working in partnership with children, families and other providers to ensure positive transitions occur.

Planning for transition is a part of our provision for all learners with SEN. Moving classes will be discussed with parents and children, as well as the relevant staff. Transition to secondary schools will be discussed in good time, to ensure time for planning and preparation.

Our Children Say…
I like that the lessons help me to get ready for my next class.
(Yr4 child)

CARING FOR THE WHOLE CHILD – Pupil Premium Funding

The Pupil Premium is additional funding given to publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers. This funding is allocated to children who:

* are currently or who have been registered as eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years
* have been in care for 6 months or longer
* have been looked after for 1 day or more
* were adopted from care on or after 30 December 2005 or left care after this date

Schools currently receive £1,455 of Pupil Premium Funding for each eligible primary-aged pupil (£2530 for children who are eligible due to being or having been in care). In September 2023, 14.3% of our pupils receive this funding and our projected Pupil Premium income for the financial year 2023-24 is £43,650. Spending will include:

- Additional staff allocation to support 1:1 or in small class-based focus groups
- Educational Psychology support related to needs of specific PP children
- Speech & Language support related to needs of specific PP children
- Family Worker support related to needs of specific PP children
- Pastoral Worker support related to needs to specific PP children
- Staff training related to needs of specific PP children
- Attendance related support
- ICT support for PP children
- Resources related to needs of specific PP children and interventions
- Subsidy of educational curriculum visits
- Subsidy of residential curriculum visit
- Year 6 Booster Group
- Additional reading support/home learning support
- Enrichment activities

We closely track our Pupil Premium children's progress in order to assess whether we are "closing the gap" and our Pupil Premium children make good progress through Quality First Teaching and the successful deployment of Pupil Funding. Further information on attainment outcomes for our Pupil Premium children are available on our website.

How do I apply for Pupil Premium Funding for my child?

Prior to September 2014 the mechanism by which Pupil Premium Funding was allocated was to offer this funding to all children who applied for Free School Meals, under the criteria set out above. From September 2014, ALL children in KS1 (Reception, Year 1 & Year 2) will be eligible for Free School Meals but parents of children IN ANY CLASS who wish to apply for Pupil Premium Funding must still go through the Free School Meals form process - therefore the forms & website links which are still in circulation and are to be used for applications for the Pupil Premium Funding are still labelled as for Free School Meals, regardless of their Key Stage. Please use these forms / the weblink to make your Pupil Premium Funding applications until rebranded ones are made available. For children in KS2 (Years 3,4,5,6) your child will then also be eligible for Free School Meals. Please visit our website for the link to apply.

THE HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Our Parents Say…
The school actively encourages its Open Door policy.
(Reception parent)

At High Firs, we are committed to involving parents in their children's lives at school. We also want them to feel welcome and to share in the life of the school. We aim to keep parents well informed about their children's education so that they see it as a partnership between home and school. Parents play a vital role through supporting school policies, such as behaviour, and like all the staff working in the school, need to act as role models to the children in terms of attitude and support to their school life.

It is very important that you keep the school informed of any important changes that may affect your child. Please let us know promptly about any medical, physical or emotional difficulties of which you become aware so that we are able to support your child.

Our Parents Say…
There is a real sense of family and belonging for all children and parents.
(Parent - Ofsted 2018)

Starting School
Parents of children starting at High Firs in the Reception Class are given early opportunities to get to know the school. We hold visits where prospective parents can be shown around the school for an informal session. An induction meeting is held and the children spend several sessions at school before their start date, when they will meet and work with their new teacher and classmates. Once the children have started school we hold "Pop in and Play" sessions so that parents can visit the children in their classroom.

Parents' Consultations and Reports
At the beginning of each school year, parents are invited to meet their child's new teacher at our Class Curriculum Meeting. This is an opportunity for teachers to outline the curriculum & level of work and the organisation of your child's new class, as well as providing vital information on how you can help at home.

Our Parents Say…
There is plenty of contact with teachers…, along with regular parents' consultations and feedback.
(Yr5 parent)

Two Parents' Consultation Evenings are held each year, when parents can make an appointment to discuss their child's progress and to see their child's work to date. A written report on the year's progress is sent home towards the end of the summer term. There is an opportunity to discuss the report by appointment towards the end of term. Additional termly meetings are offered to parents of children with a SEN or who are on our Inclusion Register.

"Open Evening" is held in the second half of Term 6. This is a very social occasion and provides an overview of the work of the whole school. No individual progress discussions are held at this very public time but parents are very welcome to visit any of the classrooms in the school to see what learning and activities take place in particular year groups.

Ways of keeping in touch
Every child has a Home-School Contact Book, which can be used by both parents and staff to pass on messages. Parents are also welcome to make an appointment to see their child's class teacher or to catch them at the end of the school day; teachers will always be willing to spare a few moments, unless they have other engagements, in which case an appointment or follow-up call will be made.

Our Parents Say…
Communication to parents is excellent.
(Yr3 parent)

Our Parents Say…
The school is very good at keeping parents informed through regular Newsletters and texts.
(Yr2 parent)

Letters are sent home with the children when necessary; as much information as possible is sent home via our weekly Newsletter, including Diary Dates, and to keep parents updated on what's happening in school. Copies of these are all also available on our website: www.high-firs.kent.sch.uk

Messages and reminders are often sent via our text system and staff may also use email to contact parents directly. We also have a school Facebook page which is regularly used for sharing information.

Helping In School

We value any help which you can give at school, whether it be working with children in the classroom or helping 'behind the scenes'. Any such help you give not only benefits the school in general, it also benefits your own child: it shows them that you value the school, are part of the school community and are interested in what is happening. These positive feelings will rub off on your own child.

If you would like to help at any time, either regularly or on an occasional basis, then please contact your child's teacher, or the Headteacher. All of our Parent Volunteers who work in school are police checked.

Our Parents Say…
Teachers are always available to talk to if needed.
(Year 2 parent)

Concerns

If you have concerns about your child's progress or well-being at school, then the first person to talk to is the class teacher; please do contact them either in person or via the Home-School Contact Book. If this does not resolve your query and you wish to contact the Headteacher to discuss any concerns further, please do contact the School Office to make an appointment.

Non-Resident Parents

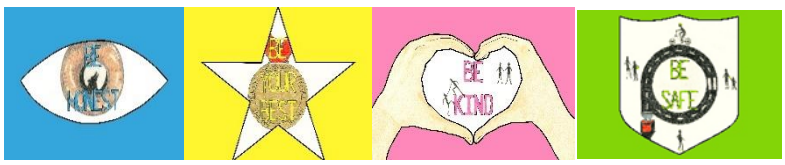
We appreciate that all family situations are different and that children may have a parent who is non-resident but who still wishes to be involved with their child's school life. Copies of all non-personal correspondence and our weekly Newsletter are put on the school website which means that non-resident parents have access to the same information as that sent home with the children. Diary dates are also published on the website so information is available about school events, class assemblies etc. We do ask that unless there are legal reasons why both parents cannot attend Parents' Consultations together that the same appointment is attended as this ensures that both parents are given the same information.

BEHAVIOUR & VALUES

[Pupils] are polite, well-mannered and show respect for each other and for adults…. Pupils describe the school as "safe, positive and welcoming". (Ofsted 2018)

Our aim is to encourage self-discipline, courtesy, consideration for others and respect for the school environment. Positive praise is essential and staff reinforce good work, good behaviour and co-operation.

Our Parents Say…
The children are treated fairly and appropriate behaviour is expected, which creates a happy school and happy children!
(Yr3 parent)



The school has a set of seven values to guide school life and behaviours, and which we feel best describe our desired ethos. These are displayed around the school and are frequently referred to.

There may be some children who need careful support & supervision due to particular needs and they will be subject to our Special Educational Needs policy.

Our Behaviour Policy
We have a Whole School Behaviour Policy and a very positive attitude to behaviour matters, always aiming to reward and encourage good behaviour – this is actioned through our house point system, our Celebration Assemblies and end of term certificates, as well as through verbal praise and encouragement.

Our Parents Say…
The school treats all children as individuals and celebrates their achievements.
(Parent – Sept 2018)

We have a reward system for courtesy & achievement, both personal & academic, and children can receive stickers or certificates for these. The reward system positively encourages self-discipline and respect for others.

Our Parents Say…
We believe the school instils good values in the children. They are always polite and kind to each other. Regardless of age all the children integrate well and show genuine care towards one another.
(Yr2 parent)

In all classes a Zone Board system is in operation. Each morning all names start on green. After verbal warnings – or moving to yellow thinking zone - and if the inappropriate behaviour continues the child moves to amber. This applies to behaviour in school assemblies too. Poor behaviour after a warning will mean a move to amber and loss of all or part of playtime(s). Individual teachers may decide to supervise children in their classroom or other location at their discretion during play / lunchtimes. During this time, children will always be encouraged to reflect on their actions in respect of the school rules, to devise an apology if needed and supported to complete any work missed.

Further unacceptable behaviour will result in a move to red, whereupon the child will be sent to the Deputy Headteacher / Headteacher who will in consultation with the class teacher decide upon an appropriate sanction. Class teachers will be responsible for contacting the Parents.

A social stories and restorative approach is used to guide children to reflect and encourage more positive choices in future. Staff use language to separate the child from the behaviours seen. This encourages all children to see each incident as a separate event and that recovery and different paths are always available.

We expect high standards of behaviour and conduct around the school. Where incidences of unacceptable behaviour occur, we have whole school procedures for dealing with them. If inappropriate behaviour recurs, we invite parents along to discuss home/school strategies, which will work towards resolving matters.
Pupils may, on rare occasions, be removed from their classrooms to work alone and sometimes we introduce behaviour contracts and reward sheets, to support children in developing their abilities to self-regulate independently.

Our Parents Say…
[The school] provides a happy & healthy learning environment where children of all ages mix well and know each other by name. It is a nurturing environment.
(Yr3 parent)

Pastoral Care, Guidance & Support

Pupils receive high levels of pastoral care which enable them to flourish and learn together [and] help develop pupils' emotional wellbeing. (Ofsted 2018)

We consider High Firs to be a very caring school, keeping the children's pastoral needs paramount. There is a clear structure of in-school support from the day to day ongoing classroom support from teachers and teaching assistants through to more structured support accessed via our Pastoral TA, Emotional Literacy Support Workers and our Family Support Worker. Our family support worker is available to help our children and their families in all areas of life.

The class teacher needs to know of any health matters or issues at home, which could affect schoolwork or behaviour. We will of course treat such matters confidentially and sensitively. In the same way, we will inform you if we notice an inexplicable change in pupil behaviour or performance or if we have any concerns.

Our Parents Say…
[The school] supports children… they make them feel like they matter.
(Yr5 parent)

Suspension
In extreme cases, a child may need to be externally suspended from school and will have to remain at home for an identified period of time. The reasons for this will be explained to parents and parents will also be formally notified in writing at the earliest opportunity of the reason for the suspension. All actions will follow the Kent County Council regulations. Suspensions are notified to the Governing Body and Kent County Council.

LEARNING AT HIGH FIRS

High Firs is a very busy learning environment! We aim to create a community where each child is helped and encouraged to develop his or her full potential in happy, caring and stimulating surroundings. Our staff have worked to develop a curriculum which is fun but informative and which meets the needs of both our children and the statutory frameworks.

Our Parents Say…
… the school gives its children a true love of and enthusiasm for learning.
(Yr4 parent)

Our Parents Say…
[My child] loves being in Reception and looks forward to going in each day.
(Reception parent)

LEARNING IN THE EARLY YEARS
The Early Years Foundation Stage is a statutory, single quality framework to support children's learning and development until they are five years old. It identifies seven areas of learning and development, which are all important and inter-connected.

Of the seven areas, three are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas are known as the **PRIME AREAS**:

- **Communication and language development** gives children opportunities to experience a rich language environment; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and to speak and listen in a range of situations.
- **Physical development** involves providing opportunities for young children to be active and interactive; and to develop their co-ordination, control, and movement. Children must also be helped to understand the importance of physical activity, and to make healthy choices in relation to food.
- **Personal, social and emotional development** helps children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others; to form positive relationships and develop respect for others; to develop social skills and learn how to manage their feelings; to understand appropriate behaviour in groups; and to have confidence in their own abilities.

In addition, there are four **SPECIFIC AREAS** through which the three prime areas are strengthened and applied:

- **Literacy** children learn to link sounds and letters and to begin to read and write. Children are given access to a wide range of reading materials (books, poems, and other written materials) to ignite their interest.
- **Mathematics** provides children with opportunities to develop and improve their skills in counting, understanding and using numbers, calculating simple addition and subtraction problems; and to describe shapes, spaces, and measures.
- **Understanding the world** supports children in making sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.
- **Expressive arts and design** enables children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings through a variety of activities.

The EYFS at High Firs is delivered through a well planned play-based approach to learning & development in which all areas are of equal importance. We aim to give the children a sound & happy start to their school life by developing a love for learning in a secure & happy learning environment, in which every child can make progress. This is achieved through a combination of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities.

The children are supported in this by their teacher and the Early Years Teaching Assistants. Our Reception classroom is spacious and is accompanied by an outdoor area with both grass & paved areas; both the inside & outside environments are used as learning areas and the children are encouraged to move freely between the two.

LEARNING IN KS1 AND KS2

Adults' guidance is building pupils' independence and helping them to become good learners.
(Ofsted 2018)

We want our children to be confident, skilled and independent learners. The early acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills is vital and we value the important role parents play in supporting this at home too. The children follow nationally agreed programmes of study in the following subjects:

Core subjects -
English
Mathematics
Science
Computing

Foundation subjects -
Art and Design
Design Technology
Geography
History
Music
Physical Education
Religious Education
Personal, Social & Health Education
Modern Foreign Languages
Religious Education
Environmental Education

Our Parents Say…
My child loves school and enjoys every lesson!
(Yr5 parent)

Our Children Say…
I learn something new each day!
(Yr4 child)

Our Children Say…
The lessons at school are interesting and fun!
(Yr6 pupil)

Our Children Say…
We sometimes find out some weird & wonderful things!
(Yr5 pupil)

English
English at High Firs aims to provide a variety of opportunities for children to learn to have a strong command of spoken and written word and to develop their love of literature through widespread reading for enjoyment.

Spoken Language
Spoken language underpins the development of reading and writing, therefore our aim is to encourage children to develop the language they hear and speak across the whole curriculum. In this way children will

be able to gain confidence by expressing their thoughts and through demonstrating their understanding and ideas. Role play and drama opportunities are vital in supporting speaking and listening and enable children to rehearse, refine, share and respond thoughtfully.

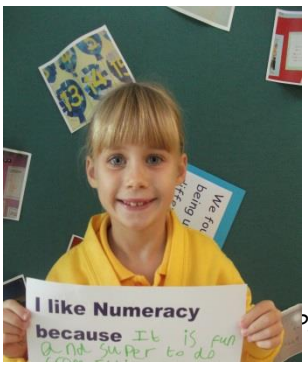
Reading
Children are taught to read independently through the Little Wandle phonics scheme. This rigorous but fun approach develops a positive attitude to reading. We have a reading scheme (Oxford Reading Tree) which children follow that encompasses a variety of enjoyable texts; both fiction and non-fiction. However all children are encouraged to choose and share books with adults that particularly interest them which helps to develop a love of reading. When children become confident independent readers there is a wide range of stimulating books in the classroom and school library from which they can choose. We are lucky to have the support of our Friends Association in recently restocking our library with some fantastic new books for the children to read. The Accelerated Reader Programme is used from Year 2 upwards to support, guide and incentivise children's independent reading choices. Guided reading sessions give children the opportunity to read to others and discuss what they have read; further developing their use of spoken English. Teachers model good reading in the classroom and lead discussion and comprehension of texts through our 'Close Reading' sessions.. Parents are asked to support their children's reading development by reading with them at home every night, not just from the scheme book but also from the child's own choice of books (fiction and non-fiction) to develop a knowledge of themselves and the wider world and we actively promote our "Resolution Read at Home" initiative.

Writing
As with reading, pupils are taught to write independently. The teaching of writing is planned for from an early stage to enable children to progress to their full potential. In the Foundation Stage and KS1 the teaching of phonics, spelling and writing takes priority to establish the basic skills of writing. Through KS2 there is an emphasis on the skills of planning, drafting, revising, proof-reading and presentation of writing. Children are given opportunities to write for a variety of purposes & audiences with a range of stimulus provided to increase enthusiasm & enjoyment. Where possible, links are made with other subjects in English to enhance children's learning. The conventions of handwriting, spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught methodically through work English and across all other subject areas. Focusing on spelling, punctuation and grammar enables children to increase their understanding of the words, clarify meanings and develop their ability to understand and use figurative language. Additionally this supports children in selecting the appropriate vocabulary and grammatical terms, when they need to discuss their reading, writing and spoken language.

Spelling & Grammar
The teaching of Phonics is good. Senior Leaders have a clear strategy for ensure that pupils learn phonics effectively... all pupils benefit from good phonics teaching. (Ofsted 2018)

Initially children are taught to spell systematically using phonics through the Little Wandle scheme. From Year 2 to Year 6, skills are built upon using the Spelling Shed scheme. Teachers plan and teach spelling patterns and rules through a variety of activities and games. The scheme follows the programme of study for each year group. Parents are asked to support children to practise and learn their weekly spellings. Grammar is taught using the 'No-nonsense grammar' scheme and again teachers plan and teach lessons that build upon the knowledge from the previous year's programme of study. Parents are asked to support children to apply the grammar and spelling taught when supporting home learning written activities.

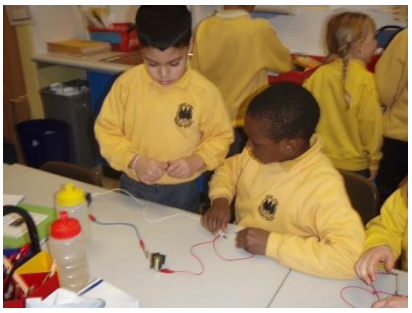
Speaking and Listening
Speaking and Listening skills are developed in all curriculum areas as we view them as integral to children's learning and confidence. Children are given opportunities to develop skills such as discussion, drama, role-play and debate through a variety of stimulating ways.



Mathematics
High Firs Primary School ensures that all pupils follow a balanced mathematics programme through using the White Rose scheme, enabling them to cope effectively & confidently with tasks at their own level of ability. A variety of opportunities are provided for children to use their mathematical skills and concepts. Strategies are taught to help children tackle genuine problems through to solution and these are taught both through the core curriculum scheme and through links to the wider curriculum.

The broad range of mathematical topics include number, gathering and interpreting information, algebra, shape & space and the five aspects of measurement - length, area, capacity, weight and time. Children are taught addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, combined with a quick recall of number bonds and tables; to support our recall of tables we use several web-based programs too.

Although the children are encouraged to use the strategies they find easiest, we do have a whole school approach to written calculations, which outlines the progression through the year groups.



Science
At High Firs our aim is that, through scientific enquiry, pupils will develop their knowledge and understanding of the natural and physical world in which they live.

Scientific knowledge is taught through schemes of work which include: electricity, forces in action (gravity, friction, magnets, pushes & pulls), light, sound, weather, the earth in space and life-cycles.

Scientific skills are taught through varied practical activities, which build on everyday experiences and existing knowledge. Children predict what they think will happen, attempt to test their ideas fairly, record their results and describe what they have discovered.

Investigations, in which children design and carry out their own experiments, encourage original thinking and develop leadership qualities. The scheme of work emphasises progression in content, concept and intellectual demand appropriate to the ability of the child.

In science we aim to encourage children to develop enquiring minds coupled with a concern and respect for resources and the environment.

Art and Design
At High Firs Primary School we aim to engage, inspire and challenge pupils to create their own works of art, craft and design, whilst fostering an appreciation and awareness of art history and art from other cultures.

We provide a learning environment in which art can be explored in a personal creative and expressive way to develop individual potential. Pupils will be taught to use materials, tools and techniques in accordance with health and safety requirements.

Pupils are encouraged to develop their creative, imaginative and practical skills through a range of media including Computing and will experience a variety of artists and styles during art lessons.

Geography
High Firs Primary School aims to provide pupils with the knowledge & understanding of geographical processes, structures, places & people whilst developing the skills required for geographical investigations. At KS1 we aim to develop children's knowledge about the world, the United Kingdom and their own locality. Their study of human and physical geography will include a focus on weather patterns in the United Kingdom and different hot and cold areas of the world. Through KS2 this extends to include studies of Europe and North and South America. They will further their knowledge of human and physical geography through exploring aspects such as Volcanoes and Mountains.

We aim to build the understanding of human impact and effects on the natural world and their own links with the wider world. Children will develop and acquire a variety of skills to investigate places and themes including using maps and atlases and observational skills to develop their locational and place knowledge.

History

At KS1 children are introduced to history through personal experience, artefacts and stories. We aim to help the pupils develop an awareness of the past and differences between ways of life in different time periods. Children are encouraged to develop a sense of their personal history and are given opportunities to sequence sort and discuss photographs, pictures and artefacts. They have the opportunity to study changes within living memory and events beyond. They will explore the lives of significant individuals and significant history in their own locality.

In KS2 the children's historical awareness is extended through a variety of study units and the use of a range of sources. We continue to build their understanding of chronology through British, local and world history. These include episodes in Britain's past, beginning with the Stone Age to the Iron Age, the impact of the Roman Empire and Saxons & Vikings. They will also study an aspect of British history beyond 1066. Similarly they will study the ancient civilisations of Greece and Egypt, as well as a non-European study. The children also learn about more recent History including what life was like for children in Victorian times (including a flavour of Victorian school-life!) and how Swanley has changed since 150 years ago. Our World War 2 topic explores life during this more recent period.

Computing

At High Firs Primary School, pupils will learn to find, analyse exchange and present information in a responsible and creative way. They will be confident and independent in their use of software and hardware to solve problems across the curriculum. Computing knowledge, skills and understanding are taught as a discrete subject through carefully planned activities linked to the National Curriculum. Pupils are also given a variety of opportunities to further develop their skills through cross-curricular links with other curriculum subjects.

We have a networked ICT suite, plus a computer in each classroom. The children also have access to additional laptops and a computer bank in the library as well as a class set of tablet computers. Each class is timetabled to have at least one lesson in the suite every week as well as additional opportunities for cross-curricular lessons at other times. We have interactive whiteboards in each classroom.

We have filtered broadband access to the Internet. Children have access to digital cameras and a DV camcorder as well as equipment specific to areas of the computing curriculum, such as programmable 'Bee bots'. We are continually upgrading the hardware and software, and our ICT technician provides regular support and maintenance which ensures our network and computers are working efficiently.

Music

We aim to extend and deepen children's responses to music through the related activities of listening, performing and composing. All children are encouraged to compose their own music according to their age and ability. From Year 1 the children are encouraged to represent in pictures the sounds they are making.

Performance is an important part of the music curriculum and singing is fundamental to class music making. All children are encouraged to perform their compositions, and opportunities are given for school and public performance through membership of the choir and music ensembles.

All our Year 5 children currently have flute or clarinet lessons once a week from a specialist teacher and this is extended to Year 6 for those children who wish to continue learning.

Listening skills are consistently developed throughout the key stages, children are encouraged to listen attentively to all musical contributions. Throughout the school there are 'listening sessions' where the children are introduced to the music of a variety of composers and musical themes are chosen for the music played at the start of each assembly. The children have a chance to sing daily, in assembly, and all children have the opportunity to take part in concerts and performances throughout the year.

Design and Technology
Design and Technology is a very practical subject, which can inspire children to use their creativity and imagination to design and make products that solve real and relevant problems.

Children will have the opportunity to develop their creative, technical and practical expertise, including linking with the computing curriculum. They will be offered the chance to design and make prototypes and actual products, then look at them and evaluate them. The children will also be given the opportunity to learn how to cook.

In KS1 children will design, make and evaluate a range of products. They will be taught the skills of cutting, shaping and joining, using a variety of tools. The children will also explore how to build structures, making them stronger, stiffer and more stable.

In KS2 the children will take part in a variety of creative and practical activities. They will design, make, evaluate and develop their technical knowledge, including using mechanical and electrical systems in their products. Each product will be evaluated against their own design criteria and will focus on possible ways to improve their work.

As part of their work with food the children will be taught how to cook and apply the principles of nutrition and healthy eating. In KS1 they will begin to prepare basic dishes and will learn where food comes from. In KS2 the children will continue to prepare and cook a variety of savoury dishes, using different cooking techniques. They will also learn about how a variety of ingredients are grown.

Physical Education
In all aspects of PE, we aim to teach pupils the benefits of participation in physical activities. They are taught to plan, improve and evaluate their performances and that of others. Children are given the opportunity to learn safely how to develop strength, endurance and control of their bodies safely through structured challenges. All children follow a balanced programme of study for gymnastics, dance, athletics and games in all years, with the addition of swimming, and outdoor adventure activities in KS2.

We have a number of out-of-school sports clubs on offer and we take part in District tournaments & athletic events as well as welcoming a specialist PE teacher to teach our classes one day a week.

Our Parents Say…
The school encourages physical fitness & exercise.
(Yr5 parent)

PE Aims -

* To provide an opportunity to take part in physical activities
* To help develop physical abilities and skills
* To develop the concept of fair play, competition and good sporting behaviour
* To provide opportunities to work co-operatively with others

* To develop the ability to cope with success and failure
* To promote through direct experience, the benefits of exercise

All our children are actively encouraged to participate in the residential opportunities offered in Years 4 and 6, which allows the children access to outdoor adventurous activities.

Religious Education & Assemblies
Religious Education is taught according to the Kent Agreed Syllabus used in Kent schools, which develops a knowledge of Christianity whilst raising awareness of other religions.

Daily assembly opportunities are in place. The assemblies follow a different pattern each day of the week, with the final assembly each week providing opportunity to celebrate and give thanks for the school week just ending. The assemblies provide many opportunities for children to participate. All assemblies reflect broadly Christian traditions but may also include learning about other cultures or religions.

All parents have a right to withdraw their child from the daily assembly or from Religious Education. Any parent wishing to withdraw a child from either assembly or Religious Education should contact the Headteacher.

Environmental Education & Outdoor Learning
We constantly aim to develop pupils' interest in the environment. Through various curriculum areas we introduce pupils to plants and animals and their habitats. Pupils learn about the difficult decisions behind the development of land and are encouraged to think carefully about the problems of pollution and the use of resources.

We encourage recycling of waste paper at school and the school participates in the council's recycling scheme each week. We also have an 'Environmental Area' near the school field. The children also use our fruit waste, grass cuttings and leaves to produce compost in our large compost bins.

Our Parents Say…
My child especially enjoys the woodland class activities. It is a particular highlight of the school.
(Yr1 parent)

We focus on enhancing the natural environment through woodland sessions and the activities of Forest School. Our outdoor learning space means that the children can take part in a range of practical activities with a great opportunity for cross-curricular links. In particular, an interactive woodland platform allows children to develop their ability to communicate and co-operate with their peers, as well as providing them with the foundations to increase independence and self-belief in their own abilities. Lastly, not only does this woodland provide the children with an environment to develop their communication and problem-solving skills, it will also allow us as teaching staff to ingrain a life-long relationship with natural spaces within the children.

Relationships & Sex Education

Through their work in Science and Personal, Social & Health Education, the children cover much of what they need to know about family life in humans and animals. This is an important aspect of children's learning about their world and themselves and one in which teachers will answer questions as they arise.

Sex Education is taught to Yr5&6 pupils by their teachers and is part of our whole-school Health Education Policy. Our Sex Education input is based around the Channel 4 programme called 'Living and Growing - Changing Bodies'. Parents will have the opportunity to view the resources we use to present the programme before the sessions are undertaken in school. Sex Education is taught in school as an aspect of Personal & Social Education and through the Science curriculum, in a way appropriate to the age of the children.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)
In all aspects of school life we aim to promote the personal and social development of children. We aim to develop an understanding of "how to look after ourselves", "basic life skills" and "interpersonal skills". We support children with their understanding of "growing up". We place great importance on incorporating an appropriate programme on Drugs Education into our everyday curriculum. We are fully involved with many "Healthy Schools" initiatives.

We also have a PSHE programme of study which is based on three core themes:
1. Health and Wellbeing
2. Relationships
3. Living in the Wider World

PSHE education is a planned, developmental programme of learning through which children and young people acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives now and in the future. As part of a whole-school approach, PSHE education develops the qualities and attributes pupils need to thrive as individuals, family members and members of society.

Multicultural Education
We believe it is essential that children develop understanding of a multicultural society. We aim to help children grow into people who respect and care for all people in the community. Many of our displays around the school reflect our multicultural society. The school has a Race Equality Policy in place which is reviewed and monitored annually. We receive good support from the Kent Inclusion Service.

HOME LEARNING

All children from Reception to Year 6 undertake regular Home Learning in the form of a "Learning Log". Our teachers take a great deal of effort to ensure that children's Home Learning is interesting and reinforces their school work. For the older children, it helps prepare them for life at secondary school. It also gives parents an opportunity to discuss school work with their children, providing some understanding of and insight into, the work they are currently doing in class. It may also be necessary, from time to time, for additional Home Learning to be set for a particular child in order to meet their specific needs.

As part of "Resolution Read at Home" children are asked to read at home to an adult every day. Times tables and spellings may also be set, as well as individualised home learning for identified children.

Aims of Home Learning
The aims and approach described below are both realistic and sensible. As in all areas of school life, it is essential that parents and school are clear about what is to be achieved, and are mutually supportive.
* To encourage and enhance the work ethic
* To reinforce work done at school
* To enable parents to share in the life of the school
* To encourage a feeling of self worth and help develop a sense of pride & achievement in an activity completed
* To help prepare older children, particularly those in Years 5 and 6, for life at secondary school

Role of the Parent
We welcome the support and encouragement parents can give to their children. This can be by simply giving time to the children and by providing a home environment in which homework can be done. Information may be fed back to the class teacher through notes in the Learning Log Book or Contact Book. Children benefit enormously from being able to discuss what they have done with their parents. This is not to suggest that the parent should spend time altering or correcting the child's work but rather discuss it and suggest how it might be done differently or improved. Constructive comments enable the children to develop a better understanding of the work and reinforce what is taught in school.

Reading is a crucial aspect of school work and needs to be encouraged at all times. A child's written skills reflect the attitude to reading; a child who reads widely and with enthusiasm is often able to translate this into written work.

In the younger classes of the school, we ask for and expect regular reading to/with the child, much discussion of story lines, characters, pictures etc, as well as hearing the child read. Speaking and listening are areas where parental involvement is of enormous benefit, too, and every part of every day can provide speaking and listening opportunities. In addition, we would encourage art-type work to be happening at home, as well as role-play activities which develop skills and stimulate creativity. Every opportunity should be taken to count, identify and write numbers, learn counting rhymes, days of the week, months of the year etc. Every day should turn up learning opportunities which can be exploited.

From Year 1, Home Learning provides opportunities for children to develop the skills of independent learning. There is always an expectation for pupils to read regularly at home and to learn spellings and tables, as well as to continue/research project work as required. Children are encouraged to visit libraries regularly and are encouraged to develop their research skills.

It may be relevant for some of the work to be done on a home computer if one is available, but if this is not the case children may be able to arrange access in school. Where information is printed off, it needs to be read and the main points selected and written into the children's own words; there is little learning value in the children either copying from the internet or printing off sheets & sheets of information and presenting it to the teacher as it is.

ASSESSMENT & ACHIEVEMENTS

At High Firs the teachers continually monitor the progress of each child in all areas of development. Diagnostic tests and formal assessment may be used to identify areas for which a child may need extra help and support.

Our Parents Say…
My child is learning and progressing extremely well.
(Yr1 parent)

Statutory Assessment
Reception Baseline Assessment, this is a short, task-based assessment which is not used to label or track individual pupils. The data is used at the end of Year 6 to form the school-level progress measure. Our new Reception intake will be invited into school in small groups on the days prior to them joining us in order to take part in this activity which will be conducted by the class teacher.

Children in Year 1 undertake phonics screening at the end of Year 1 – this assesses their ability to "sound out" known and unknown words.

All Y4 children complete a times tables test online. The results are reported to parents in the end of year report.

At the end of KS2 (Yr6), each child is assessed against National Targets in aspects of English, Mathematics and Science. These tests are called Standard Assessment Tests (SATs); Writing and Science are currently assessed by the class teacher, with maths, reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling being scored by tests.

Non Statutory Assessment
To monitor a pupil's progress, teacher assessment and supporting tests are undertaken throughout the terms in the core subjects for all our classes. The outcomes of these assessments are then reported to parents, either via Data Slips sent home or at the Parents' Consultations. We feel it is important for parents (and children) to know both how children achieve on a daily basis, as well as under test conditions. Your child's current attainment will be reported to you as working towards, working at, or working at greater depth within expected levels.

Assessment in the Foundation Stage
Children in the Early Years (Reception class) are assessed in terms of the seven areas of learning identified in the Early Years Framework. Children are observed & assessed by all the adults working in their classroom and are subsequently matched to a particular stage of development using this evidence. The majority of these observations and assessments are required to be undertaken during activities that have been initiated by the children rather than during staff-led sessions.

Our Latest Results (which can be seen below)
All schools are required to publish SATs results in their school prospectus, as well as reporting them to parent. KS1 and 2 SATs returned in 2022 after a hiatus over the Covid-19 pandemic.

HIGH FIRS PRIMARY SCHOOL
REPORTING OF STATUTORY DATA 2023

The outcomes of this year's Early Years, Yr1 Phonics, Yr2 and Yr6 statutory assessment are shown below.
There were no Statutory Assessments undertaken nationally in 2020 or 2021 due to Covid-19.

EY (RECEPTION)	% AT GOOD LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT
2019	67%
2022	63%
2022 National	*65%*
2023	72%

YR1 PHONICS SCREENING	% AT PASS
2019	83%
2022	79%
2022 National	75%
2023	73%

YR2 TEACHER ASSESSMENTS (INCLUDING STATUTORY TESTING OUTCOMES)					
% at Expected					
	Reading	**Writing**	**Maths**	**Science**	**R+W+M combined**
2019	63%	63%	67%	70%	-
2022	72%	62%	76%	79%	55%
2022 National	67%	58%	68%	-	53%
2023	80%	67%	77%	93%	60%
2023 National data for KS1 is not yet available.					

YR6 STATUTORY TESTS OUTCOMES AND TEACHER ASSESSMENTS					
% at Expected +					
	Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	**Reading**	**Writing**	**Maths**	**R+W+M combined**
2019	73%	60%	73%	77%	50%
2022	63%	70%	63%	73%	57%
2023	72%	83%	62%	72%	52%
2023 National	*72%*	*73%*	*71%*	*73%*	*59%*

% at Above Expected					
	Grammar, Punctuation & Spelling	**Reading**	**Writing**	**Maths**	**R+W+M combined**
2019	27%	20%	27%	30%	17%
2022	40%	37%	23%	20%	20%
2022 National	-	28%	13%	22%	7%
2023	24%	17%	3%	27%	3%
2023 National data is not yet released.					

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The 1993 Education Reform Act requires all schools to provide a daily act of worship that is "wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character". At High Firs, collective worship is closely linked to assemblies, which provide important times for the school to meet together and share successes and issues that may arise during the week. We hold Whole School Assemblies, Key Stage Assemblies and Celebration Assemblies over the course of a week, as well as periodic Class Assemblies for parents & visitors. There are also classroom based opportunities for reflection.

Under the 1993 Act, parents have the right to withdraw their children from collective worship at school. We hope that you will come and talk to the Headteacher if you feel that this might be appropriate before finally deciding.

RELATIONSHIP & SEX EDUCATION

Through their work in Science and Personal, Social & Health Education, the children cover much of what children need to know about family life in humans and animals. This is an important aspect of children's learning about their world and themselves and one in which teachers are concerned to answer questions as they arise.

Sex Education is taught to Yr5&6 pupils by their teachers and is part of our whole-school Health Education Policy. Our Sex Education input is based around the Channel 4 programme called "Living and Growing - Changing Bodies'. Parents may view the resources we use to present the programme on request. Sex Education is taught in school as an aspect of Personal & Social Education and through the science curriculum, in a way appropriate to the age of the children. Our Sex and Relationship Education Policy has recently been reviewed with the help of teachers, governors and parents. You are welcome to ask for a copy. Parents will be advised when Sex Education is to be carried out with their child's class and parents do have the right to withdraw their child from these sessions.

SPORTING ACTIVITIES

We aim that all children at High Firs develop an enjoyment of being active and taking part in physical & sporting activities.

Our PE curriculum offers all children throughout the school the chance to participate in a varied programme of games, dance, gym and athletics lessons. Swimming is also an integral part of our physical education programme, with lessons at White Oak Leisure Centre included as one of their units of learning.

Our pupils have the opportunity to compete with other schools in netball, football, cricket, athletics and rounders matches and take part in District tournaments. The school has also had much success in recent District cross-country, athletics and football events. We have been District Football Champions four times in recent years and we are also three-time District Athletics Champions.

We encourage all children in Year 6 to take the opportunity to participate in a five day residential trip and which enables them to undertake outdoor adventurous activities. For those not attending we offer the opportunity to take part in a more limited number of similar activities closer to home. Our Year 4 children also have the opportunity to attend a two night residential trip.

We are very pleased that our commitment to sport, both curriculum PE opportunities and out-of-school activities, was recognised by the Dartford School Sports Partnership, who awarded us a Silver Award.

The government are spending over £600 million on improving physical education (PE) and sport in primary schools and High Firs received £17,770 for the academic year. This is being spent on:

- hiring specialist PE teachers to work with our own teachers during PE lessons- providing staff with training and specific ideas for teaching PE/sport more effectively.
- running a variety of different and new after-schools sports clubs for both key stages.

- Continuing to run intra-school sports tournaments
- Attending inter-school events
- Purchasing resources linked to these new activities

Outcomes for previous spending of our PE funding are judged as being successful because:

- Hiring specialist PE teachers to work with our own teachers during PE lessons has provided high quality teaching for our children and upskilling for our staff to ensure that this continues in the future.
- After-school clubs offered opportunities for children to participate in sporting activities.
- All Key Stage 2 children took part in Intra-School sports tournaments, in a variety of sports.

EDUCATIONAL VISITS and VISITORS

We believe that educational visits out of school give children vital opportunities to extend their learning and visits may be taken to support the curriculum across all year groups. In recent years, children have had the opportunity to visit The Museum of Kent Life, Horton Kirby Environmental Centre, Hall Place and the Imperial War Museum, amongst many other venues. All children are also encouraged to participate in our Yr6 residential trip to the Isle of Wight and our Year 4 residential trip to Blackland Farm.

Our Parents Say…
The school does well at providing regular, educational, trips.
(Yr5 parent)

We also invite visitors, speakers and theatre groups to come into school to share their knowledge and expertise with our children. For example, we have enjoyed visits from authors, representatives from different faiths & cultures and theatre groups, as well as those professionals who have shared their skills with us during our "World of Work" weeks.

For information on payment arrangements for school visits, please see our "Finance Information" section.

CLUBS

School staff volunteer to run a wide range of after-school clubs for the children to join. A list is published each term from which to choose but in recent terms has included:

Our Parents Say…
There is plenty of choice of after school clubs.
(Yr2 parent)

Art	Football
Netball	Speed stacking
Games	Cricket
Rugby	French
Craft	Recorder
Dance	Rounders
Construction	

We do not generally run after-school clubs for our Reception children as we feel that their day is long enough! Permission is needed for children to attend after-school clubs and children are expected to commit to attending all sessions; we rely on parents to arrange for their children to get home at the later time and to inform staff when children cannot attend their club. Occasionally, an activity may be cancelled if a teacher is sick or has a professional engagement, or if there are other events in school. Outdoor clubs may have to be cancelled when weather is inclement. If we do need to cancel a club we will let parents know at the earliest opportunity; usually via the Newsletter or by text.

Breakfast Club
If you do need to drop your child off at school before 8.45am, Foots Cray Out of School Club run a thriving Breakfast Club in the school hall. Children need to arrive between 7.30am and 8.15am. The cost is currently £4.00 per day and all children from Reception to Year 6 are very welcome. You do not need to book for breakfast Club, but please complete the on-line registration form if you would like to use this service.

After School Club
Foots Cray Out of School Club also provide supervised provision in school for your child from 3.15pm to 6.15pm at their After School Club. Provision includes a snack on arrival, planned activities, recreation time and a meal. The cost is currently £10 per child, or £6 if you collect your child before 4.15pm. Parents wanting to use After School Club must book a least 2 sessions each week, this must be done by the Friday of the week before the service is needed. Please visit our website for more information and the registration and booking forms.

FRIENDS OF HIGH FIRS

All parents are automatically members of the Friends of High Firs School Association. The Association is run by a committee, elected by parents and other members at their Annual General Meeting. The committee arrange many social and fund raising events for the children & parents and they very much contribute to the corporate life of the school. Their interest and support is a valued part of the school organisation, and all their hard work on behalf of the children is very much appreciated. Parents are often invited to help with activities and requests for help will be published in the Friends of High Firs section of the Newsletter. The money raised from the many fund raising activities organised by the Friends of High Firs has gone towards providing many extra items for the children, as well as funding major projects around the school. Projects have included new interactive whiteboards in classes and developing the playground area, providing games tables, wall games and playground markings. The work of the 'Friends' is much appreciated by the children, staff and Governing Body.

The Friends can be contacted via the School Office or email at friends@high-firs.kent.sch.uk Each class also has representatives for the FHF to raise awareness of events & projects.

HELPING AT HIGH FIRS

We have a number of parents and friends of the school who give their time supporting us voluntarily in many different ways. This includes helping with clubs, hearing children read, coming in to talk about different cultures or sharing other areas of expertise. Parents may also be needed to help on school visits. We are very grateful for whatever assistance is offered, however often.

Helping in school also benefits your own child: it shows them that you value the school, are part of the school community and are interested in what is happening during their day. These positive feelings will rub off on your own child.

All school helpers working regularly with the children undertake DBS security checks.

If you would like to offer your help to the school, please do get in touch with the School Office.

HIGH FIRS AND THE COMMUNITY

The school aims to equip all its children with a sense of belonging in the community - whether this refers to the school, the local area, the British Isles or the global community.

On a school level, we want our pupils to be members of a welcoming & cohesive community with learning and friendship at its core, with a developing awareness of the increasingly rich diversity of backgrounds, origins, beliefs and cultures which we are surrounded by in the British Isles. We will help all to belong and to feel equally valued as members of our school and as citizens & residents of the United Kingdom where "British Values" are promoted.

The children are encouraged to make a positive contribution to the school community, to care for and contribute to it by taking on responsibilities and having their voice heard in the school through open discussion and the School Council.

Our Children Say…
I like our school because it is a friendly community.
(Yr6 pupil)

We aim to forge links with the local community, inviting local residents to events and keeping them updated on what is going on at the school. We also have close links with a local residential home for the elderly and the children enjoy visits there and welcoming the residents to events at school.

Our children are encouraged to find out about and find ways to support charitable organisations that are of interest to them; recent fundraising events have included walking the Sport Relief Mile, our annual cake sale for MacMillan Cancer Relief and activities for Children in Need. We have also been recognised for our support of The Poppy Appeal; we have received an award for 25 years of collections at school and the children were invited to meet veterans of the past 50 years at the Poppy Appeal launch at County Hall. The children regularly support "Operation Christmas Child", often collecting more than 50 shoeboxes to be sent to underprivileged children in Eastern Europe. Our Christmas performance collections have recently benefitted Little Buds, Home Start and the Encephalitis Society.

UNIFORM

We have an attractive school uniform at High Firs which adds to a sense of identity and community; parents are requested to support the school in making sure that their child wears the correct uniform.

School Uniform
Smart black or grey trousers or shorts (not sports shorts or tracksuit bottoms)
Grey skirt or dress tunic (to the knee)
Gold sweatshirt / cardigan with school logo
Gold polo shirt with school logo
Plain Black, grey or white school style socks or tights.
Summer dresses in yellow or yellow & white in simple style and of appropriate length

Footwear
All children should wear sensible, flat-heeled school style black shoes that are secure to the foot. Open-toed shoes or slip-on shoes are not appropriate and no responsibility is taken for children wearing unsuitable footwear to school. Trainers are not suitable for school day wear and are not part of the school uniform.

Children should also have an overall or apron for craft work.

Jewellery
Jewellery may not be worn at school. If your child has pierced ears, small stud earrings may be worn at your own risk. However, on PE days, we ask that earrings are not worn. This follows advice we received from the County PE Adviser. Children may wear watches to school, however smart watches which can receive text and pictures are not allowed. Please discuss with the school if there is any jewellery you would like your child to wear regarding religious observance.

Hair
Hair that is long enough should be securely tied back during the school day. This is for health & safety reasons – it ensures that hair does not become tangled or caught and also helps reduce the spread of headlice. Hair bands and clips should be discrete, small and in school colours.

PE Kit
PE bags are available for purchase in the house colours from the School Office.
All children will need the following:-
Round-neck t-shirt in house colour
Black plain shorts
Black plain tracksuit bottoms
Plimsolls – (KS1 & KS2)
Trainers (for outdoor use, KS2 only)

As per advice from Kent County Council and "Safe Practice in Physical Education", published by The British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in Physical Education (BAALPE), indoor gym & dance activities are undertaken in bare feet. Work in bare feet is strongly recommended because this:

- Maximises the exercise value and promotes the development of strong, healthy feet.
- Enables tactile sensation with the soles of the feet on working surfaces and thereby increases your child's safety.
- Promotes work of quality through extension of the ankles and toes.

Verrucae, athletes' foot and other infections should be treated in accordance with medical advice, but should not normally prevent active participation in sports. A thin-soled plimsoll may be worn for gym or dance activities if this is the case as trainers are not appropriate; a rubber sock should be worn for swimming.

Valuables and Personal Property.

All clothing should be clearly marked with your child's name. Items of clothing are frequently handed in as 'lost property' and their owners never traced because the clothing has not been marked. The school cannot be held responsible for any lost property. PLEASE ENSURE THAT ALL CLOTHING AND PROPERTY WORN OR BROUGHT TO SCHOOL IS CLEARLY NAMED. There is always a risk of damage or loss and children should not bring valuable possessions or money to school unless it is for a specific purpose.

Purchasing Uniform
Uniform clothing is available to order directly from our supplier Brigade. Please see our website for more information and a link to their ordering page. Book bags, rucksacks, hats and water bottles can be purchased directly from the school office, or online using school money. Baseball caps are provided for all children when they start school as a gift from the FHF; they also provide a Reading Record bag for children when they start in KS1 and a Record-style bag for KS2 children. Children in Yr5 & Yr6 also have the option of a school branded rucksack. Only these bags should be used due to lack of storage.

FINANCE INFORMATION

School Voluntary Fund
Our School Voluntary Fund is used to pay for lots of different things. Essentially, it is used for expenses which we are not allowed to allocate to government funding but which we believe lead to a broader educational experience for our children or which support our community & families links. This also means we do not have to charge parents every time! Just a few examples of this spending are:

- Concert & performance costumes and other costs.
- Refreshments for parents & visitors at school events – Nativities / Assemblies / class meetings etc
- Cookery ingredients
- Celebration of commemorative events – Whole School Jubilee Day party etc.
- Expenses for Open Evening & events such as the SATs BBQ
- Visitors in to school
- Additional resources for school visits

Parents are asked to support this fund by a contribution of £2.50 per child for the first two children or a total of £6.00 for three or more children, per term. This contribution is voluntary and although we suggest this sum, any contribution you can make is greatly appreciated.

SCHOOL MONEY
Our School Money Site is a cashless system where you can pay for school hats, water bottles, bags, school trips, swimming and residential trips. All trips and activities are set up when the letter explaining this is sent to parents. When pupils start at the school parents will be sent log in and password details so that they can access the School Money site.

Our Charging Policy
There will be times when parents are asked to pay for school-related activities. Sometimes, payment will be entirely voluntary and at other times it will be obligatory.

You may be asked to contribute voluntarily towards the cost of an activity for activities that take place wholly or mainly within school hours, such as class visits, swimming lessons or a visiting expert at school. Or, for activities that involve expensive materials with which children are making things to take home e.g. cookery items. In such circumstances, parents receiving Income Support and claiming Free School Meals will not be expected to make a contribution for the activity. No child will be excluded from these activities because the parents have not made a voluntary contribution. However, the school may have to cancel planned events if there is insufficient financial support.

Parents are required to pay for:
* Individual or small group tuition from an outside source (eg: musical instrument tuition).
* Activities that take place wholly or mainly outside school hours or which are additional to the curriculum.

We aim to keep requests for payments to a minimum and to give you as much advanced notice as is practicable. However, we do rely on parental support in order to plan future events. We are very grateful for the support of The Friends of High Firs in meeting the costs of some of our extra activities.

Sending money into school

All money should be sent into school via your child in their book bag and should be in an envelope clearly marked with your child's name, the amount and purpose. Please send separate payments in separate envelopes.

HEALTH MATTERS

The school has close links with both the Community Paediatric Service and School Nursing Service team and will consult them if concerned for a child's health; parents are also invited to use this service if they have any concerns.

It is the duty of the Local Education authority under Section 48 of the 1944 Education Act to provide for the medical examination of pupils in attendance at every school. This may include:

Vision and Hearing tests
Dental Surveys
Height and Weight checks
Flu immunisation

If a child catches head lice, please keep the child at home and treat the condition. Please inform the school (in confidence if you wish). Regular head inspections are no longer part of the health care programme.

Should we see headlice, we will phone parents to collect the child and take them home to be treated immediately. This ensures that the headlice can no longer be transferred in school and it is kinder to the child than keeping them in school & attracting other children's attention to the situation. We do rely on parents to be very responsible in combing out headlice and eggs very vigilantly.

Parents of other children in classes where headlice have been identified will be notified so that they may check their own child's hair and treat if necessary.

Medicines
Please do not send medicines into school unless absolutely necessary. It is often possible to arrange things for medication so they do not fall in the school day. If you are unable to do this medicines must be taken to the office and a Permission to Administer Medication Form completed & submitted. Please do not send medication directly with your child; medicines must be collected at the end of each day by an adult. Inhalers can be kept in school, provided they are clearly labelled with name and dose, and can be administered by the child under the supervision of a school first aider; all inhalers are kept in a marked area in the child's classroom.

Illness
Please notify the school if your child has, or if you suspect they have, an infectious or contagious disease. This is particularly important in the case of Rubella (German Measles), measles, chicken pox or shingles. It is also important to let us know if your child has been exposed to these illnesses (eg through a friend at a club or a family member) but has not shown the symptoms themselves. Please also let us know if your child has also been in contact with any other infectious diseases. We have children in school who are dangerously susceptible to these illnesses in particular and your support in notifying us is much appreciated.

If a child is ill in school, every effort will be made to contact the parents or other preferred contact so that the child can be collected to go home. If a child has an accident, a parent or preferred contact will also be informed. It is therefore vitally important that we have up to date home, work and mobile telephone numbers for both parents and other contacts. This is so that we can contact you should the need arise in matters concerning your children. If parents cannot be traced and treatment is required, we ask parents to consent for emergency treatment to be given at the hospital accident and emergency department or medical advice sought in their absence.

If a child has an infectious or contagious disease, parents should check with their doctor as to the date of return to school. Please, follow the procedures outlined on page 8. Children who have had sickness and/or diarrhoea must not return to school within 48 hours of the last incidence.

We have trained first aiders on our school staff and, in the event of an accident, appropriate first aid will be given. In the case of more serious accidents, we will contact you as soon as possible. Every parent will be asked to sign an agreement form giving permission for appropriate medical emergency treatment to be arranged in the event of an extreme emergency or parents not being available.

Allergies
Please tell us if your child is allergic to a particular food or substance. We do have children & staff in school with a nut allergies and so parents are asked to support their wellbeing by not sending in any nut-based products.

Religious objections to medical treatment
Please let us know if you have any objections to any particular medical treatments.

SCHOOL CLOSURE

School closure is only undertaken in extreme cases and always as a last resort; it will normally only occur if there are conditions that make being in school unsafe for your child and / or our staff. Should the school need to close during the day for any reason e.g.: lack of heating, water not being available or heavy snow fall, we will contact you as soon as possible to advise you of the situation and the arrangements for collecting your child. It is essential that you ensure that your contact details are kept up to date and that the School Office is kept informed of any changes.

During periods of bad weather, school closures will be notified to parents via our text system or information posted on our school's website and Facebook page.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

High Firs operates an "Open Door" policy and we hope that parents will discuss their concerns with us readily. If you have any concerns about your child's education or time at school, in the first instance please talk this over with your child's Class Teacher at a mutually convenient time - we do, however, ask that parents do not ask to see teaching staff before school to ensure a prompt start for all of the children at the beginning of the day. If this does not resolve your concern then please contact the office to make an appointment to speak to the Headteacher or another member of Senior Staff. If you are then still not satisfied that your complaint has been settled by informal discussion with the Class Teacher and Headteacher, you can ask to have it considered by the Governing Body; submissions should be made in writing via the school office.

We would very much hope that any problem could be resolved through discussion with the staff at school. Because of this, we would ask that any concerns are discussed with the school directly and not aired via social media, playground discussions or other public forums. This can, in particular, cause distress for pupils and misrepresentation of events or opinions.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The school can provide on request:
* Curriculum and Whole School Policies
* Details of the Governing Body, dates of meetings and minutes.
* Information about the National Curriculum.
* Copies of the Kent Curriculum Statement and Agreed Syllabus for RE.
* Information for YrR / Yr6 parents regarding the Primary & Secondary School Admissions processes.
* Further information about items such as Special Needs Education.
* Information on benefits available to parents and transport issues can be obtained from Kent County Council.

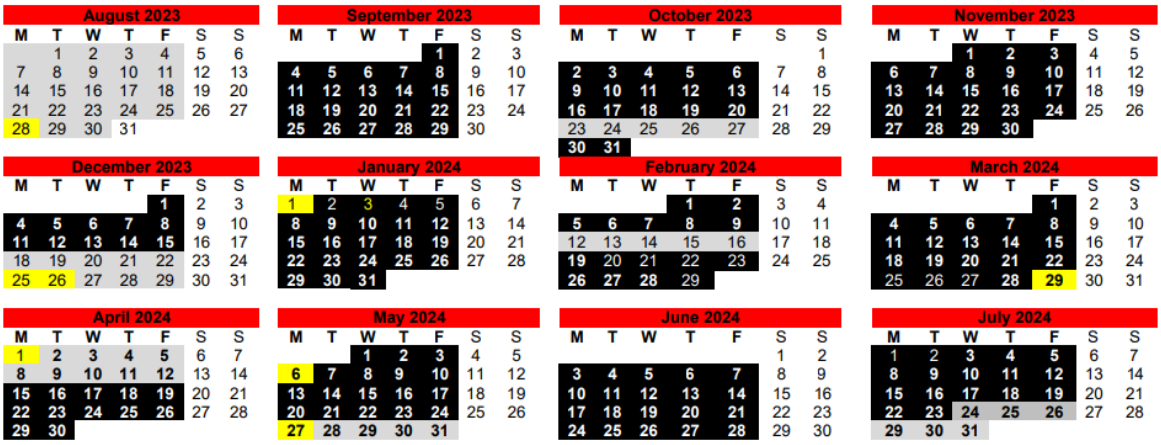
There is also updated information on our school on our website: www.high-firs.kent.sch.uk

TERM DATES

Over a school year, pupils are required to attend for 190 days (380 sessions).
The term dates for the coming academic year are below. These dates are set by Kent County Council but do not include the five additional INSET (Staff Training) days on which children are not required to be in school and which are set by each school individually. High Firs' INSET days are notified to parents as early as possible and are published on our website.

INSET dates this year are:
Fri 1st Sep 2023
Mon 30th Oct 2023
Tues 2nd Jan 2024
Fri 24th May 2024
1 more date TBC

Determined



INSET/ Non-contact days for teachers:
Over a school year, pupils are required to attend for 190 days/380 sessions. In total, teachers may be required to be available for work on up to 195 days, with the additional days specified by individual schools as non-contact days. Schools may also require teachers to work additional hours before or after school sessions, as an alternative to full non-contact days, provided that any teacher is not required to work in aggregate more than 1,265 hours during a school year. Schools may therefore choose to require teachers to make up the full equivalent of the 5 non-contact days wholly through additional hours, or use a mixture of additional hours and non-contact days.

2023/24
Standard School Year based on 6 terms with additional INSET days

Term 1	**36 days**	**01/09/23 - 20/10/23**
Term 2	**35 days**	**30/10/23 - 15/12/23**
Term 3	**29 days**	**02/01/24 - 09/02/24**
Term 4	**29 days**	**19/02/24 - 28/03/24**
Term 5	**29 days**	**15/04/24 - 24/05/24**
Term 6	**37 days**	**03/06/24 - 23/07/24**

School day
School holiday
Bank holiday