



9<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024

# High Firs Primary School

## NEWSLETTER

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### Message from Mr Kilbride

I think the attendance figures this week show us that everyone needs a rest, so half term has come along just in time! Hopefully when we return, we can look forward to some warmer days and lighter evenings not far around the corner. Despite the cold and wet weather this week, Y6 came out of their Forest School session yesterday proclaiming this had been the best day ever! This is testament to the great activities led by Mrs Verge and the enabling of message through Forest School that you can enjoy the outdoors and nature in any weather – and also to the universal appeal of hot chocolate and s'mores!

A very busy newsletter today – please take the time to read in full – I really want you to help your children to make the most of the Times Table Rockstars website, so we have included some information to remind and guide you about this today. From Y2 onwards, children who can learn their tables quickly will find maths in KS2 so much easier, leading to their longer-term happiness and engagement.

We are beginning to experience problems in school due to missing reading books from our Big Cat for Little Wandle scheme books that underpin our in-school reading groups and home readers for Reception and Year 1. These books are only 18 months old and we need full sets of 6 of every title to run our reading groups properly. Please can you have a look around at home and see if you have any that could be returned. Sadly, it looks like we will have to spend more school budget on replacing some of these titles.

Starting today, in an effort to further inform you about our school curriculum, each weekly newsletter will contain some information from a subject leader about how we are developing learning across the school in that particular subject. I hope you find these to be informative – if they raise any further questions, please do feel free to ask. Today it is Miss Rennie with some great information all about SEN.

Please also see the Random Acts of Kindness sheet attached. I would love to see what children get up to over the half term – we will award additional house points for sheets completed and returned and will celebrate some of the acts of kindness in assembly.



### Litter Angels

Back in the Autumn Term, Year 5 entered an anti-litter poster competition run by the charity Litter Angels. This competition was open to Year 5s in lots of different schools across the Sevenoaks district. This week, we have been able to

announce our winners. Firstly, congratulations go to our in-school runners up: Samuel and Isabella. Our in-school winner, Poppy, has also been awarded overall competition winner, so a very well-deserved congratulations go to her too! As the overall winner, her poster has been made into a sign which will be displayed in the McDonald's car park in Sevenoaks.

### Sports Hall Interhouse Competition

Years 5&6 enjoyed their first Interhouse of 2024 when they participated in



the Sports Hall Athletics competition. The outcomes were:

1<sup>st</sup> - Oak - 1649 points

2<sup>nd</sup> - Chestnut - 1550 points

3<sup>rd</sup> - Ash - 1546 points

4<sup>th</sup> - Beech - 1303 points



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## Voluntary Fund

Thank you to all those parents who have already made this term's Voluntary Fund payment. We greatly appreciate these donations which are used to support many of the extra activities undertaken in school by the children. The suggested payment is £2.50 per child or £6 per family and can be paid in cash to school or via our SchoolMoney app. *What is the Voluntary Fund used for?* The termly voluntary fund money 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
- Refreshments for parents & visitors at school events – Nativities / Assemblies / class meetings etc
- Cookery ingredients
- Celebration of commemorative events – Whole School Coronation Day party etc.
- Expenses for Open Evening & events
- Visitors in to school
- Additional resources for school visits

We believe that visits and these other experiences are a vital part of our children's education – thank you to all those parents who support us in this way.



## Special Mentions

Well done to all of our children who received a Special Mention and certificate from their teacher in assembly today –

- Betsy W – super buildings using wooden bricks.
- Jenson G – always trying his best in all his learning.
- Emma B – fantastic maths!
- Anthony L – working really hard in all subjects.
- Kaylee V – a detailed non-chronological report about penguins.
- Logan F – improved focus with his reading.
- Annabelle B & Edy O – working really well together in Science to make a magnetic game.
- Morgan W & Miraculous K – great vaulting in gymnastics.
- Omolade O & Omolayo O – great wall bar work in gymnastics.
- Honey B – persevering with tasks in maths.
- Bethanie L – always working hard, particularly with writing and maths.
- Ronnie R – excellent work with decimals in maths
- Benjamin A – excellent description of the skybeast from our book.



## Register Rabbit

Congratulations to this week's Key Stage winners of Register Rabbit for their excellent attendance:



**YEAR 2**  
**YEAR 4**

Our class totals were:

Year 4 94.1%  
Year 3 93.7%  
Year 5 93.3%  
Year 6 93%  
Year 2 90.7%  
Year R 83.1%  
Year 1 75.9%

## Big Garden Bird Watch

Well done to all the children who took part in the Big Garden Bird Watch this year – we had 15 entries returned. Thank you to Miss Selby and her School Council helpers who counted all the results!

## What did you see?

Can you find a way to make it easy for you to note down the highest number of each species that you see together at the same time? There is room below each bird's name for you to add your idea for doing this.

Woodpigeon

93

Blackbird

47

Carrion crow

24

House sparrow

57

Starling

20

Black-headed gull

71

Magpie

31

Blue tit

8

Robin

18

Feral pigeon

42

Great tit

12

Chaffinch

4

4 seagulls  
11 mallards  
49 Canadian geese  
1 coot  
11 moorhen  
9 collared doves  
2 Egyptian geese  
2 coal tits  
4 parakeets  
19 Greylag geese  
2 marsh tits

## THIS WEEK'S LEARNING

### In our classes this week

Reception – made doubles.  
Year 1 – learned about the senses.  
Year 2 – compared Antarctica and the Arctic.  
Year 3 – learned to write a Kenning.  
Year 4 – looked at a biography of Philip Pullman.  
Year 5 – wrote explanations of how mountains are formed.  
Year 6 – used longitude and latitude to plot grid references.



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	This Week	Term Total	Top Scorers this week
<b>BEECH</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>854</b>	Jonas Y2; Harrison Y6
<b>CHESTNUT</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>1337</b>	Aaron Y1; Benjamin, Annie-Grace, Bella Y6
<b>OAK</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>1006</b>	Charlie YR, Emma Y1, Jack Y2; Elijah Y6
<b>ASH</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>1200</b>	Eva YR; Jack B Y6

## Friends of High Firs Primary School Association

Supporting Our Children's Education

Registered Charity No. 1137633

**\*\* NEXT MEETING – Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February at 7pm \*\***

**Everyone is welcome so please come along!**

### Times Tables Rock Stars

All children in Years 3-6 (and some children in Year 2) have logins for Times Tables Rock Stars which can be used to practise times tables. If children are practising at home using the website, please ensure you use this up-to-date link to access:

<https://play.ttrockstars.com/auth/school/student/32243>



When playing games in Times Tables Rock Stars, playing in 'Garage' mode allows class teachers to see which times tables the children are finding easy and which need more practise. This is done by the website creating a heatmap. This heatmap can also be viewed by children when they login and select Garage mode.

	10	2	5	3	4	8	6	7	9	11	12
10	10 × 10	10 × 2	10 × 5	10 × 3	10 × 4	10 × 8	10 × 6	10 × 7	10 × 9	10 × 11	10 × 12
2	2 × 10	2 × 2	2 × 5	2 × 3	2 × 4	2 × 8	2 × 6	2 × 7	2 × 9	2 × 11	2 × 12
5	5 × 10	5 × 2	5 × 5	5 × 3	5 × 4	5 × 8	5 × 6	5 × 7	5 × 9	5 × 11	5 × 12
3	3 × 10	3 × 2	3 × 5	3 × 3	3 × 4	3 × 8	3 × 6	3 × 7	3 × 9	3 × 11	3 × 12
4	4 × 10	4 × 2	4 × 5	4 × 3	4 × 4	4 × 8	4 × 6	4 × 7	4 × 9	4 × 11	4 × 12
8	8 × 10	8 × 2	8 × 5	8 × 3	8 × 4	8 × 8	8 × 6	8 × 7	8 × 9	8 × 11	8 × 12
6	6 × 10	6 × 2	6 × 5	6 × 3	6 × 4	6 × 8	6 × 6	6 × 7	6 × 9	6 × 11	6 × 12
7	7 × 10	7 × 2	7 × 5	7 × 3	7 × 4	7 × 8	7 × 6	7 × 7	7 × 9	7 × 11	7 × 12
9	9 × 10	9 × 2	9 × 5	9 × 3	9 × 4	9 × 8	9 × 6	9 × 7	9 × 9	9 × 11	9 × 12
11	11 × 10	11 × 2	11 × 5	11 × 3	11 × 4	11 × 8	11 × 6	11 × 7	11 × 9	11 × 11	11 × 12
12	12 × 10	12 × 2	12 × 5	12 × 3	12 × 4	12 × 8	12 × 6	12 × 7	12 × 9	12 × 11	12 × 12

The colours show how many seconds it has taken for a question to be answered:

0 - 1s	1 - 2s	2 - 3s	3 - 4s	4 - 5s	5 - 6s	6 - 7s	7 - 8s	8 - 9s	9 - 10s	> 10s
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Times Tables Rock Stars uses an algorithm to automatically select the best questions for each individual student to practise based on their previous answers. Once certain times tables are being answered correctly and quickly, new times tables will be 'released' to the student.



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## Parent Guide

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



### What are the different Game Modes?

#### Single Player

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

#### Multi Player

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

### FAQs

<b>How can I hide the timer?</b>	Start a game and press ⚙ > Hide Practice Clock. You could also play a game in Jamming.
<b>How can I increase the length of Garage games?</b>	Single player > Garage > press the little arrow below “play solo” > choose 1, 2 or 3 minutes.
<b>The tables are too hard</b>	Make sure your child is playing in Garage or Arena game modes. If this does not resolve the issue, please speak to your child’s teacher. Remember that Jamming mode allows the child to choose the tables themselves.
<b>My child has visual impairments; what settings are available?</b>	Head to the Profile page where you can: change the colour scheme; reduce the visual stimuli with Declutter mode; increase the font size or switch to a dyslexia-friendly font called Lexie. play.trockstars.com is also screen reader compatible.
<b>Can I turn off division?</b>	Yes in Jamming mode but not in the other games. The reason for that is that practising multiplication and division at the same time supports the recall of both and is the most successful approach. If your child is finding division confusing, please speak to their teacher about starting with the 10s only and for advice on how to help at home.



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**INSET DAYS**

Fri 24<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Mon 1<sup>st</sup> July 2024

**Coming up after half-term...**

Fri 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb Y5/6 Girls Football Match at 3.00 (no football club)



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### Random Acts of Kindness Challenge

We are inviting all our children (and grown-ups!) to take part in our Half Term Random Acts of Kindness Challenge. All you have to do is do something kind each day. Not only will this be helping other people, we will also be helping ourselves - because when we're kind it improves our own physical and mental health. There are some suggestions below but you don't have to do these ones, they are just ideas. Let us know what you have done by completing the table and returning it to school – there will be a certificate for everyone who completes the challenge.

## RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS WEEK HALF TERM CHALLENGE

Make a thank you card and give it to someone.	Help someone to do something.	Say please and thank you.	Say well done to someone.	Make someone laugh today.	Make a list of the best things about your parents/carers.	Share your favourite game with someone.
Help someone when they are upset.	Offer to clean the classroom or your bedroom.	Ask a friend if they are OK.	Help people who are on their own at playtime.	Pick up litter and put it in a bin.	Encourage someone to keep trying.	Send a note to a friend saying why they are a good friend.

**My name is**

**Day 4**

**Day 1**

**Day 5**

**Day 2**

**Day 6**

**Day 3**

**Day 7**



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February 2024

# High Firs Primary School

## FOCUS ON: SEN

### What is SEN?

"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:

- \* have a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age: OR*
- \* 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 SEN profile in 2023-24 shows that we have approx 25% of children identified as having SEN; 2% of pupils have an Education & Health Care Plan.

### How do I know if my child has SEN?

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

We will always contact you if we have any concerns about your child in school and parents are welcome to contact us with any queries or to arrange a meeting. There are also regular scheduled opportunities for parents and teachers to keep in touch or for us to share information – some of these are for all our children and others are just for those children with additional needs (\*):

#### Autumn Term

Meet the Teacher  
Parents Consultation Meetings  
Attainment reports  
Intervention Information  
Provision Plans \*  
Inclusion Meetings \*

#### Spring Term

Parents Consultation Meetings  
Attainment reports  
Intervention Information  
Provision Plans \*  
Inclusion Meetings \*

#### Summer Term

Annual Report  
Intervention Information  
Provision Plans \*  
Inclusion Meetings \*

### How do I know if my child has a level of Need?

We use the guidance below, in line with the Code of Practice. It is most important to note that for many of our children their termly interventions are just an area in which their teacher wants to give them a quick boost – this is "Quality First Teaching" and what teachers do to help your child move on! If your child has an identified need then they will be in one of the following categories shown overleaf:



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<b>No Need</b> Your child is making expected progress and has no identified needs.	<b>Wave 1 – Universal Quality First Teaching.</b> Your child's needs are met by a range of teaching and learning strategies used in class which leads to them making progress. This may include booster interventions for short-term progress and does not mean your child has a concern or need.		
<b>Monitoring</b> Your child is at risk of not making progress or may have a need which has not yet been fully identified.			
<b>AEN – Additional Educational Needs</b> Your child needs some additional support to make progress OR your child has an identified need but this is not currently having an impact.		<b>Wave 2 – Targeted Support</b> Your child may need group or individual support / interventions or boosters to make progress.	
<b>SEN – Special Educational Need</b> Your child needs intervention and support to make progress; this may include external agencies.			<b>Wave 3 – Personalised</b> Your child may need highly personalised support and / or support from external agencies.
<b>EHCP – Education and Health Care Plan</b> Your child has significant needs which require a high level of intervention and support from both school and external agencies.			

### How will my child's needs be met?

Our teachers and team of Teaching Assistants deliver interventions and personalised programmes to support learning – these are identified in the provision map as developed by your child's class teacher and co-ordinated by our SENCO. Many of our teachers and TAs are trained in specialist areas to ensure the best support we can give for our pupils; this includes Dyslexia, Sensory Circuits, Emotional Wellbeing, and ASD.

For some learners we will also 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 the NHS or Kent County Council, which are described on the KCC website (link later on in this Newsletter).

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. Children identified as having SEN are entitled to support that is 'additional to or different from' a normal differentiated curriculum and this is monitored by the SENCO. 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.



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## How are my child's needs monitored and provision reviewed?

In line with the Code of Practice we use ASSESS - PLAN - DO - REVIEW:

ASSESS - analysis of your child's needs to help all parties understand these and the best way to support them. Information can be contributed by school, parents, the child and other agencies where applicable.

REVIEW - this will take place after the agreed period. We will evaluate the effectiveness of the support put in place and decide what needs to happen next.

PLAN - we will identify the adjustments we can make, the interventions and support the child will have and what the intended outcomes are

DO - we put everything from the plan in place and carefully observe and assess what happens for your child as a result.

## Who's Who?

All our class teachers and TAs, as well as our Midday team, receive regular training and updates in lots of different areas of SEN and support children with a variety of needs across the school. We also have a number of staff who take responsibility for specific areas of need:



**Miss Rennie**  
Special  
Educational  
Needs  
Coordinator



**Miss Kelly**  
Speech &  
Language TA



**Mrs Kumah**  
Pastoral and  
Family Support



**Mrs Miles**  
Emotional  
Literacy Support  
(ELSA) and Zones  
of Regulation



**Mrs Phipps**  
Dyslexia

We are also very fortunate to have regular support from our commissioned services – **Dr Samantha Smith** (Educational Psychologist) and **Vicki Maher** (Speech & Language Therapist) who are both in school once every six weeks or so offering specialist support. We are also able to access support from the **Kent Local Inclusion Forum Team** (LIFT) and the **Specialist Teaching & Learning Service** (STLS).

Your child's class teacher knows your child best so please do get in touch with them first with any queries – however, ***please do contact any of our SEN team if you would like any further advice or support.***



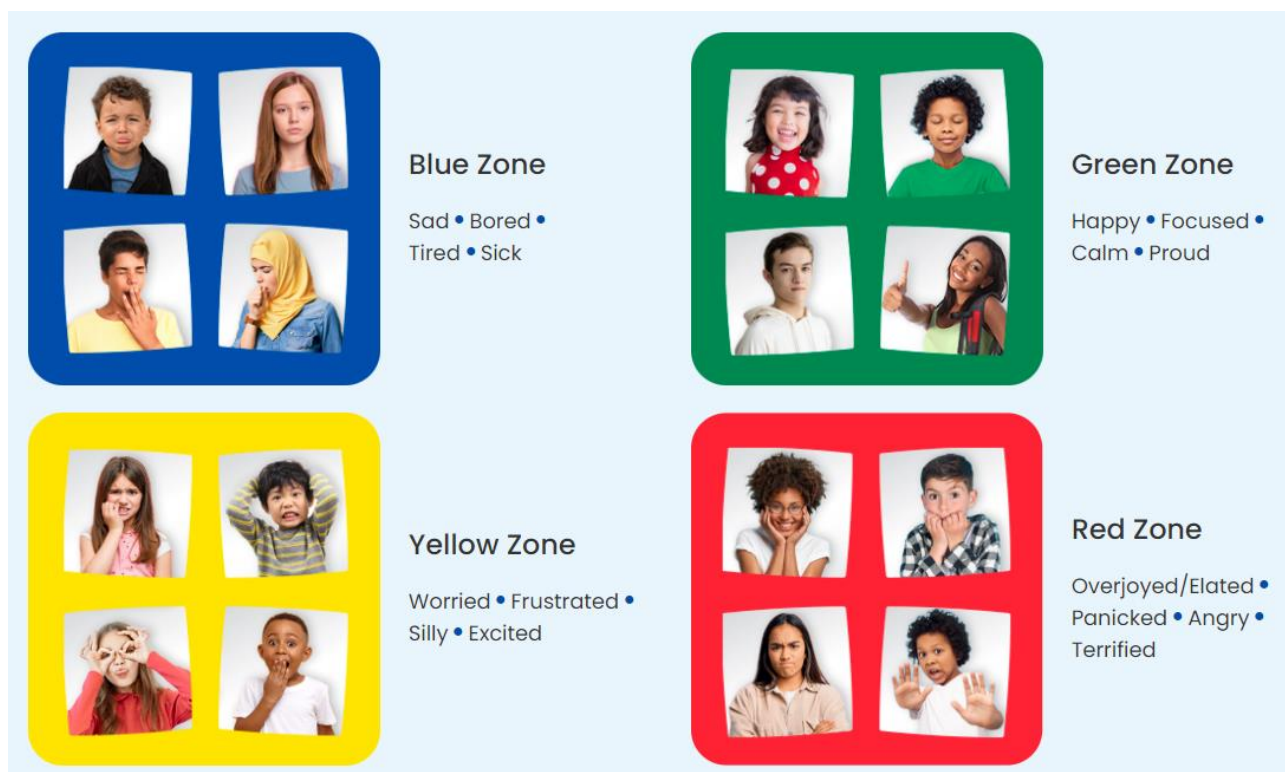
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## Nurturing Schools Project

A key focus for the past 12 months has been our participation in the National Nurturing Schools Project. The NNSP is an 18-month journey, with each school developing a bespoke whole-school approach to embed a nurturing culture. It supports Quality First Teaching and Learning and promotes healthy outcomes for children and young people, focusing on social and emotional needs and development alongside academic learning. Training and development has been undertaken with all the staff and we have focussed on key areas across the school including pupil voice, community involvement, changes at lunchtimes and developing use of the Zones of Regulation.

Zones of Regulation endeavours to support an increased self-awareness and social and emotional skills through a common language for communication, problem solving, and emotional understanding. You may have heard your child describe how they are feeling using a particular colour; this language is used and ascribed to certain emotions and possible associated behaviours and strategies for supporting this can then be implemented -



There are many ways we support children with Special Needs but at High Firs we want to ensure the provision is right for each INDIVIDUAL child.....

### More information

Our school's SEN information can be found at:

<https://www.high-firs.kent.sch.uk/sen>

KCC SEN information can be found at:

<https://www.kelsi.org.uk/special-education-needs/special-educational-needs/send-training-and-support/sen-support>



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**SEN COFFEE MORNING**

Come along to our SEN Coffee Morning - everyone is welcome whether they have a child on our SEN register or just want to find out more...

**Thursday 21st March at 9am**

There will be coffee and chat, along with the chance to ask any questions you may have about our provision. We will also be welcoming a representative from BEAMS to talk about the support they can offer.

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU!**



### Interventions and support

We are proud of the range of interventions and expertise we have to support our children. This includes:

- Communicate in Print
- Numicon
- Lego
- Funky Fingers
- BEAM
- Social Communication
- Dyslexia
- Speech & Language
- Supporting ASD at lunchtime
- Social Stories
- Self-regulation
- Dyscalculia
- Hearing Impairment
- Self Regulation
- Social & Emotional wellbeing
- Maths Support
- Anxiety
- NELI
- Toe by Toe
- Language Link
- ASD & Communication
- Behaviour Management
- Team Teach
- Emotional Literacy
- Selective Mutism
- Oppositional Defiance Disorder
- ADHD
- ASD
- Speechlink
- Sensory Difficulties
- Circle of Friends
- Playground games
- Sensory Impairment
- Colourful semantics
- ...and lots more!

# the pod

**The Pod** is a fantastic online resource from Kent Children's Therapies - <https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/childrens-therapies-the-pod/> It includes lots of advice and videos with information, support and ideas for those working and living with children who have Speech and Language difficulties, physical disabilities and neurodivergence (including ASD). It is highly recommended so do take a look!

### We are Beams

Beams is an incredible local charity based in Hextable that supports children with any kind of need and their families. This includes fun sessions for all the family and parent support, advice and information groups, including a Fathers group. More information is available at <https://wearebeams.org.uk/>



### ASD & ADHD assessments

After discussion with you, we may make a referral to Kent paediatrics requesting an assessment of your child for ASD and / or ADHD. The waiting times for an assessment to be undertaken are currently up to 42 months and we know that awaiting assessment and its outcomes can be the source of considerable anxiety for our parents. We hope that parents are reassured that we do NOT await the final outcomes to ensure that support is in place for your child; we will work to address your child's needs now. However, further information on the current waiting period is available at: <https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/community-health-online/apology-working-hard-to-reduce-waiting-times-for-children-who-need-our-community-paediatric-service/>



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