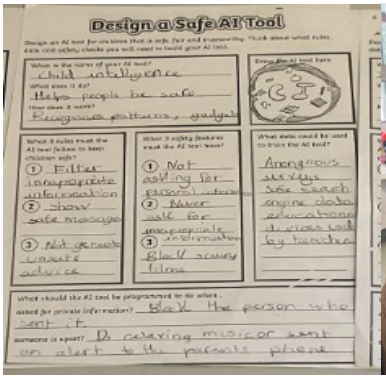
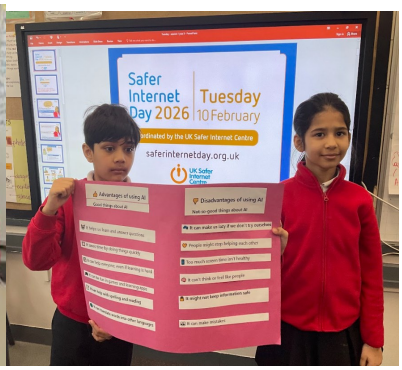
OPCH Federation Newsletter

Jan/Feb 2026

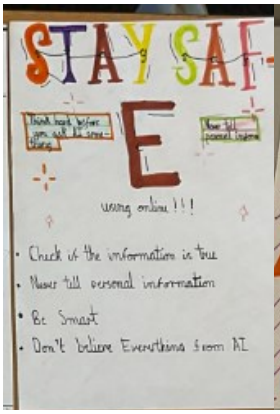
INTERNET SAFETY DAY

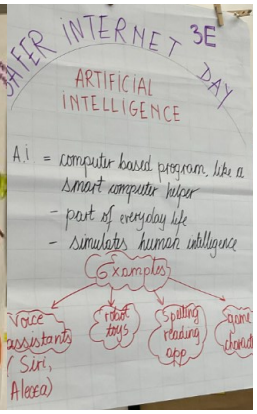


On the 10th February, pupils participated in Safer Internet Day 2026 under the theme "Smart tech, safe choices – Exploring the safe and responsible use of AI". Throughout the day, children engaged in a variety of interactive activities, such as Year 1 and 2 pupils exploring voice assistants through the story of 'Roo' and designing their own smart devices complete with safety rules. Older students in Years 3 and 4 worked collaboratively to sort scenarios into categories, deciding when to use AI, when to prioritize "human" thinking, and when to ask for support, while Year 5 and 6 students investigated digital footprints and used critical thinking to analyze AI-generated content like deepfakes and chatbots. A central message learned



across all year groups was that "smart tools don't always mean the right answers," as AI can make mistakes or provide biased information. The children also learned vital safety rules, most importantly to never share personal information—such as their full name, address, or passwords—and to always check with a trusted adult if they encounter anything online that feels confusing, unsafe, or worrying. A workshop for parents was held by Mr. Manalo sharing key messages about the theme and how they can support their children when using devices. A copy of the presentation can be found HERE.





IMPORTANT DATES

SPRING 1 HALF TERM

School finishes Friday 12th February 2026

Return to school Monday 23rd February 2026

END of SPRING HALF TERM

School finishes Friday 27th March 2026

Return to school Monday 13th April 2026

Please visit our school website for a full list of term dates

OPCHfederation.co.uk

RECOGNITION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

We were proud to recently receive a letter from Brigitte Phillipson, Secretary of State for Education, congratulating Old Palace on the work we do to secure excellent academic outcomes for our disadvantaged pupils. We are committed to ensuring that all our pupils achieve their full potential regardless of their starting point in life. We do this by carefully tracking each child's progress, adding interventions where needed and supporting parents through workshops such as Time to Engage. We are also passionate about providing first hand experiences for the children, such as trips and cultural events, so our pupils gain the same experiences as those in more affluent areas. It was delightful to have our work in this area recognised and celebrated.

A message from Bridget Phillipson

Dear Gary,

Congratulations to you and your team on the excellent outcomes the disadvantaged pupils at Old Palace Primary School achieved at the end of the 2024/25 academic year. Your school's performance places it among the very best nationally, and this is a significant achievement.

This success reflects the dedication of your staff and the hard work of your pupils. It shows what can be achieved when ambition and commitment come together. Thank you for everything you do to give children the best possible opportunities to succeed.

Your school's achievements demonstrate what is possible, and I hope you will continue to share your experience and best practice with others. Even the strongest schools can go further. We encourage you to lead the way as a system leader - sharing effective practice, championing networks, supporting collaboration, and helping raise standards across the sector.

Please pass on my thanks and congratulations to your staff and pupils. I look forward to working with you as we strive together to raise standards for all.

Bridget Phillipson

Secretary of State for Education

PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

COFFEE MORNINGS, WORKSHOPS & COURSES

Coffee Morning: Free School Meals

On Thursday 15th January, parents were invited to attend a Coffee Morning focused on applying for Free School Meals (FSM).
In Tower Hamlets, all pupils receive a free school lunch. However, some pupils may also be eligible for additional school funding if their parents or carers are in receipt of Universal Credit. Forida, our Parent Support Worker, was available on the day to support parents with completing the LBTH online FSM application form. Parents who were unable to complete an application during the session were offered 1:1 appointment at a later date. To check your eligibility please click HERE.

Coffee Morning: New Year New You

On Thursday 22nd January, parents were invited to a "New Year New You" themed coffee morning, which focused on making healthy lunch choices. During the session, we gently explored the different food groups and shared practical ideas for reducing sugar intake. We also talked about the importance of staying active and highlighted free opportunities for parents to get involved, including the walking group and badminton sessions held at Old Palace.
Parents exchanged views and discussed questions regarding school dinners and ideas around preparing healthy packed lunches, including suitable options for school trips. The session encouraged positive discussion and offered simple, achievable tips to support healthy eating at home.
An example of a lunch option that parents felt was both affordable and easy to prepare included:

- A wholegrain sandwich or wrap with chicken, tuna, egg, or hummus
- A piece of fresh fruit
- Vegetable sticks
- Water

Please click HERE to view our what items are permitted for a healthy packed lunch.
For parents who missed the session, there will be another opportunity to attend a workshop on healthy eating on **Thursday 12th March, 9:00–10:00am,** Healthy Lives from TH will deliver on healthy snack ideas for celebrations times/ Eid

Coffee Morning: Attendance

On Thursday 29th January, parents were invited to a Coffee Morning focused on attendance. The session provided an opportunity to explore the school's attendance policy and how the school can support families.
Parents were guided through key procedures and expectations, including:

- Contacting the school before 9 am if their child is absent
- Providing evidence for appointments
- Returning to school after appointments whenever possible
- Understanding that a full day's absence is not needed for a half-day appointment

The session offered a friendly environment for parents to ask questions and gain clarity on attendance procedures, helping to support children's learning and wellbeing.

Coffee Morning: Cost of Living

On Thursday 5 February, Ricky Sian from the Bromley-by-Bow Centre led our Cost of Living Coffee Morning**.** Ricky talked parents through which household appliances use the most energy, the associated costs, and how making small changes at home can help reduce energy usage. He also shared a range of useful websites where parents can sign up and, if eligible,

Coffee Morning: Minor Aliments

On Thursday 12th February, Shelly led a coffee morning focused on managing minor ailments. As an ice-breaker, parents were invited to sort common childhood illnesses into those that could be treated by a pharmacist and those that required a GP appointment. Many parents were surprised to learn that most minor illnesses can be safely treated by a pharmacist. This can save valuable time, removing the need to book a GP appointment or take children out of school. Pharmacists are able to give the same medical advice as a GP for these conditions and will always recommend contacting a GP if a further opinion is needed. Thank you to all the parents who attended.

Medical Tracker Workshop

At Old Palace, we held a Parent Workshop Thursday 8th January to discuss ways we could improve accident reporting. As a result, we have introduced a new system, called Medical Tracker. This system allows staff to log incidents in real time and for parents to then be alerted via email. It is important that parents activate email notifications so they are aware when a message has been sent. If a message is received, parents are welcome to call the school office, if they require additional information.

Sensory Explorers

Peter from the Parental Engagement Team delivered a three-part workshop for parents and children in our 2-year-old provision. The sessions explored how sensory play can boost children's learning and development.
Sensory play is especially important in the early years because it helps children make sense of the world through touch, sight, sound, smell and movement. Activities like sand, water, playdough, messy play and natural materials support brain development by encouraging children to explore, investigate and problem-solve. It also helps to build fine motor skills (through squeezing, pouring, scooping and moulding), early communication (as children learn new words to describe what they notice and feel), and social skills (such as taking turns and sharing resources) . It was lovely to see so many parents come along and engage with their children, trying out simple ideas they can continue at home to extend learning beyond the setting.

Digital IT Course

We have been very fortunate to offer a Digital IT course for our families at Old Palace. The sessions were facilitated by Gregory-Dean Hinds from the Bromley-by-Bow Centre (BBBC), and aimed to tackle digital exclusion and improve digital confidence. The parents who attended were signed up to Learn My Way – Develop Your Digital Skills, an online portal that allows learners to continue developing their skills both in class and at home. Parents showed great enthusiasm and engagement in learning through this platform. During the sessions, additional topics were explored, including broadband and mobile phone bills, with guidance on finding more affordable providers. Parents also had the opportunity to download and explore the NHS App, as well as learn how to use ParentPay and the Teachers2Parents app. Most importantly, the course provided a safe and supportive learning environment, allowing parents to learn at their own pace, with help available when needed. Language was no barrier, and everyone was encouraged to build confidence without pressure.

If you would like to take part in this course or would like further information, please contact: Gregory-Dean.Hinds@bbbc.org.uk

Three week Parenting course
This half term, Forida delivered a three week parenting course focused on setting boundaries, building routines and encouraging positive behaviour. The sessions offered parents practical strategies for creating a structured and supportive environment, helping to foster their children's development and wellbeing.
Parents explored ways to set healthy boundaries, maintain consistency in routines and how to use effective behaviour management techniques.
It was a great to see parents openly discussing their challenges without worrying about being judged. Thank you to those parents who attended and shared their parenting journeys, experiences and exchanged ideas.

SPEC
Shelly Rahman, our Parent Support Worker, continues to run the informal **"Speaking English with Confidence"** sessions every Monday from 2:15–3:15 pm. All parents are warmly invited to join.
These friendly, conversational sessions are designed to help parents build confidence in speaking English. There are spaces, if you are interested please speak to Shelly/ Forida for more information.

ESOL Class
Jonathan Farningham, from the Idea Store, will continue to deliver the 'Family Introduction to ESOL' course to help develop confidence when speaking English in daily life. Parents get the chance to practice their writing skills, including improving their grammar and spelling. Classes take place every Thursday from 13:30 to 15:30 at Old Palace. If you are interested in taking part, please speak to Shelly/Forida

Supporting your child at home

At Children's House, Shazna led a storytelling session, focusing on the importance of sharing stories at home. Parents reflected on stories from their own childhood and talked about the different ways they can encourage a love of reading with their children.
We then enjoyed the classic tale of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, parents created their own masks. Parents negotiated roles and acted out the story together, it was so lovely to see them adding their own creative twists and changes along the way. Everyone joined in enthusiastically and agreed that bringing a story to life in this way was a joyful experience. Families took their masks home to continue sharing the story with their children.

Mirka & Forida led a parent workshop on supporting learning at home, linked to our focus story, The Three Little Pigs. They shared the book with families and explained some of the learning that has taken place in the classroom, including how children have been extending the story through making props, puppets and models. Mirka encouraged families to try this at home too, showing how simple, homemade props can make stories more meaningful and help children retell them with confidence.

Mirka also highlighted the value of spending at least 10 minutes each day sharing a book or story together as calm, quality time, without phones or screens. Parents were then joined by their children, they then worked together to create their own puppets and models, following their child's ideas and interests as they made and played.

Attendance Matters
Being in school every day and arriving on time makes a big difference to children's learning, confidence and friendships. Small amounts of missed time quickly add up. For example:
Being 10 minutes late each day equals over 31 hours, or almost 4 full school days.
Missing 1 day every fortnight adds up to 19 days a year, or nearly 4 full weeks of school.
And missing 1 day each week means a child would miss 38 school days in the year, that is 20% of their learning time!
We would also like to remind families that children can attend school with minor ailments, such as a mild cough or cold, hay fever, headache, tummy ache, or generally feeling a little under the weather. Often, once children are settled and with their friends, they feel much better.
School can also administer medication, including prescribed medicines and those bought from a pharmacy, as long as a medication form has been completed by a parent or carer. Please contact the school office if you need a form or further information.
Term-Time Leave
To avoid disruption to learning, leave should not be taken during term time. All holidays should be booked during school holiday periods. Leave taken during term time may result in the family receiving a fixed penalty notice of £80 per parent, per child, which doubles if not paid within 21 days. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within three years, this will be issued at a flat rate of £160 per parent per child.
Thank you for your continued support in ensuring your child/ children are in school, on time, and ready to learn every day.

Making Healthy Choices Together

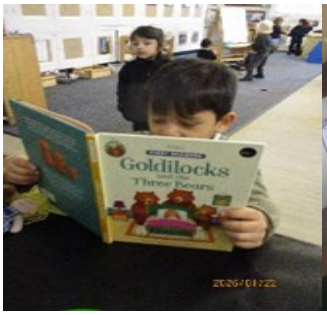
Families joined us for a 'Healthy Families' session with Peter from the Parental Engagement Team Tower Hamlets. We focused on making simple, positive food choices at home. We talked about healthy eating and what this can look like for young children, including practical ideas for healthy snacks and ways to support children who may be fussy eaters.

During the session, Peter demonstrated how to make sushi as a fun, hands-on way to introduce different ingredients and textures. Parents then worked together to make their own sushi to take away, discussing simple swaps and healthier options, such as using wholemeal bread and including a range of colourful fillings.

Making porridge and baking biscuits

Throughout the nursery children made porridge using oats and milk, following a simple recipe and measuring ingredients. They explored the smell, taste and texture, then added honey and talked about how it changed the flavour. This naturally introduced early maths language such as more/less and full/empty. The experience led to conversations about baking. Although we follow planned themes, we always build on children's interests when they show curiosity and interest about other areas of learning, so we supported this through baking biscuits. Outdoors in the nursery garden, children extended the experience through making mud porridge in the mud kitchen, they took part in pouring, stirring and describing what they noticed as they explored different textures and mixtures.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY AT NURSERY: HOMES



This half term, our learning has been led through books, with Homes as our key theme. The children have been exploring two familiar traditional tales 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' and 'The Three Little Pigs' using them as a starting point for rich play-based learning. Through these stories, children have been developing their vocabulary, growing in confidence when retelling familiar events, and developing early maths and problem-solving skills. The theme has also supported thoughtful conversations about what makes a home feel safe and comfortable, as well as exploring feelings and the choices characters make.

Our work with Goldilocks and the Three Bears has been especially exciting, with lots of opportunities to develop imagination and meaningful language. The story has helped children build their understanding of opposites and descriptive vocabulary such as too hot/too cold and too hard/too soft, while the three different-sized bears have supported early maths learning. Children have enjoyed comparing and ordering by size, using language such as small, medium and big.

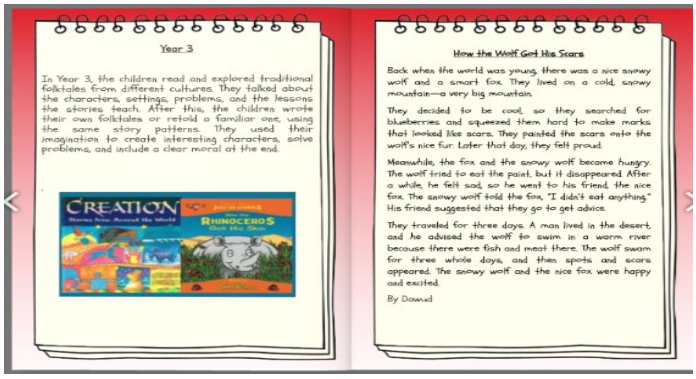
For our youngest children in the Red Building, Goldilocks and the Three Bears has been a wonderful way to bring the story to life through real objects such as bowls, spoons and teddy bears. The children also worked together to create large scale props of Goldilocks and the bears, which quickly became a favourite part of our role play. This inspired lots of imaginative storytelling as children acted out the story using the props, made porridge, and even "fed" the bears in their home. These playful experiences supported turn taking, joining in with actions, and using simple repeated words and familiar phrases from the story.

EARLY MONRING READERS

This half term, our Friday Morning Reading sessions began in Reception. It was wonderful to see so many parents attending these sessions. During these sessions, the children were thrilled to have the opportunity to share storybooks with their parents and enjoy being read to. It was a lovely experience for everyone involved. We look forward to welcoming parents again and hope you will continue to join us for the sessions next term.

ASPIRING AUTHORS

Aspiring Authors is produced once every half-term and showcases a collection of independent writing from pupils across KS2. This magazine offers a wonderful glimpse into the fantastic writing happening within our classrooms and highlights the specific books that have inspired our young authors to find their own voices. To mark the release of each edition, we host a Launch Party. We invite parents and carers to join their children in school to browse the latest issue together and celebrate their writing achievements. Immediately following the launch party, the full edition of Aspiring Authors is uploaded to our school website for our wider community to enjoy. You can find the digital gallery HERE. We hope you enjoy reading these fantastic articles and stories as much as the children enjoyed producing them!


Year 3

In Year 3, the children read and explored traditional folktales from different cultures. They talked about the characters, settings, problems, and the lessons the stories teach. After this, the children wrote their own folktales or retold a familiar one, using the same story patterns. They used their imagination to create interesting characters, solve problems, and include a clear moral at the end.

CREATION

RHINOCEROS

How the Wolf Got His Scars

Back when the world was young, there was a nice snowy wolf and a smart fox. They lived on a cold, snowy mountain—a very big mountain.

They decided to be cool, so they searched for blueberries and squeezed them hard to make marks that looked like scars. They painted the scars onto the wolf's nice fur. Later that day, they felt proud.

Meanwhile, the fox and the snowy wolf became hungry. The wolf tried to eat the paint, but it disappeared. After a while, he felt sad, so he went to his friend, the nice fox. The snowy wolf told the fox, "I didn't eat anything." His friend suggested that they go to get advice.

They traveled for three days. A man lived in the desert, and he advised the wolf to swim in a warm river because there were fish and meat there. The wolf swam for three whole days, and then spots and scars appeared. The snowy wolf and the nice fox were happy and excited.

By Dawud

THE THREE LITTLE PIGS

The Three Little Pigs offered a powerful way to explore the idea of building homes that are strong, safe and secure. The children explored a range of materials, while doing this they thought about what makes a structure stable and how to make it stronger. The story also supported language development, as children repeated familiar phrases such as "I'll huff and I'll puff…" and used story vocabulary naturally in play.

The children have worked together in Forest Area building and creating homes for the pigs using natural materials such as sticks, leaves, straw/grass, and mud. Children have also enjoyed extending the story through block play, building enclosures and homes and then using small world characters to retell the story or invent new versions. Creative learning linked strongly to the wolf's dramatic "huff and puff." Through Huff and Puff painting, children mixed powder paint colours and explored blowing techniques to move paint across paper, developing controlled breathing and observing what happened as the paint spread. This supported vocabulary such as lines, swirls, patterns, wet/dry and light/dark, while encouraging children to describe and explain what they noticed.

BOOK WEEK OUTLINE 2026

Old Palace Primary School and Children's House Nursery will be celebrating **World Book from 2nd to 6th March**. During this exciting week, children will immerse themselves in the work of a specific author and take part in a variety of tasks, including exploring reading for pleasure, and becoming book detectives. For our younger children at the nursery, there will be lots of opportunities to act out favourite stories through role play.

Key Dates for Your Calendar:

Tues 3rd March	**Reception and Year 1- Bedtime StoryTime:** 3:45-4:30We invite children to come dressed in their pyjamas and bring along a soft toy to cuddle while listening to a story. The children will be placed into small groups, each supported by a staff member during story time. **Whole School Competition Launch**Your child will bring home details about the competition on Monday. They will need to:¨ Draw a picture of their favourite book.¨ Write a reason why it's their favourite.All entries must be submitted to their teacher by **Wednesday, 4th March**. Certificates for the best entries will be awarded in Friday's Assembly.
Wed 4th March	**Year 3 & 4-Parent Reading Breakfast**Join us for our Main Breakfast Club with Reading from 8:00am to 8:30am. children, and parents/carers are all welcome to enjoy a free breakfast—alongside some morning reading!**Author visit: Marissa Webb**1:30-2pm- Children's House2-3:30- Visiting Reception and Year 1 There will be an opportunity to pre-order a copy of her book, 'Hide and Seek', for £8. A letter with further details will be sent out after half term
Thurs 5th March	**Year 5 & 6- Parent Reading Breakfast**Join us for our Main Breakfast Club with Reading from 8:00am to 8:30am. children, and parents/carers are all welcome to enjoy a free breakfast—alongside some morning reading!**Author Trips:**10-12pm- Year 5 - Trip to Whitechapel Town Hall to see Max Evans.1-3 pm- Year 2 - Author Trip to Whitechapel Town Hall to see Nicola Slater. **Book Tokens**£1 Book tokens will be given out to children to bring home at the end of the day.
Fri 6th March	**Dress up** Children can come dressed up as their favourite book character.**Reception Parents Morning Reading 8:45-9:10**Reception parents will be able to come in and listen to their children re- telling the story they've been reading using story maps. **Children's House Parents Morning Reading at 9-9.30am and Afternoon 12.30-1pm**Nursery parents: Come along and share a story with your
Fri 6th March	**Book Fair at Children's House** **11.30 - 12.00pm** **3.15 - 3.45pm**
Mon 9th March	**Book fair**: Two slots:**8:50–9:20** Reception & KS1**3:30–4:00:** Year 3 – Year 6

YEAR 6 STEP INTO UNIVERSITY

Year 6 had an exciting trip to London Metropolitan University in Aldgate. During their visit, pupils enjoyed a guided tour of the fantastic facilities, exploring real lecture theatres, study spaces and specialist learning areas. They took part in engaging discussions about the wide range of subject choices available at university and began thinking about their own future aspirations. To finish the day, the children confidently presented their own presentations in a real lecture theatre, sharing which subjects they would choose and explaining their reasons in front of their peers.

YEAR 4 VISIT LONDON BUDHIST CENTRE

To consolidate their RE learning on Buddhism, Year 4 visited the Buddhist Centre in Bethnal Green. During the visit, they took part in a short meditation workshop and learned more about Buddhist beliefs and how these can influence the way people live their lives. The children also had the opportunity to ask questions to a member of the Buddhist Centre staff, who explained Buddhist practices and shared insights into daily life as a Buddhist. This visit supported the children's preparations for their recent festival assembly on Nirvana, helping them deepen their understanding of Buddhist teachings and celebrations. The children especially enjoyed the calming meditation session and exploring the peaceful atmosphere of the Centre.

AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS & WRAP AROUND

Running Late?
Traffic Delays? Emergency Appointment?
We are here to help

We now offer emergency Wrap Around Care until 5.45pm for all our pupils, so if you are going to be more than a few minutes late collecting your child, just let us know and we will arrange for your child/ren to join the Wrap Around Club. The charge is £8 per child per session.

During the session, children will take part in a range of play-based, fun, and engaging activities, and also receive a healthy snack

Where possible we ask that parents book sessions in advance. To do so, please send an email to the admin account. Payment is taken via School Money or Teachers2Parents. Old Palace After-school sports clubs will restart from 2nd March. Parents will need to reapply for clubs. Details will be sent out once we return after half term.

CHILDRENS HOUSE VISIT DOCKLANDS MUSEUM

On 22nd January a group of parents and children visited the Museum of London Docklands, during the visit we took part in the River Rhythms workshop. The children enjoyed exploring sounds and patterns inspired by the river, joining in with rhythm activities and responding through movement and listening.

In the Mudlarks Gallery, the children had the chance to explore in a truly hands on way. They worked together with the building blocks, creating structures and sharing ideas as they built. The dressing up area was also a highlight, with children taking on important roles.

Children particularly enjoyed the largescale climbing equipment and the water exploration area. it was a wonderful experience and everyone had lots of fun.

YEAR 4 VISIT SIR JOHN SOANES CENTRE

Year 4 enjoyed an exciting visit to Sir John Soane's Museum as part of their Ancient Greeks topic. During the visit, the children learned about the life of Sir John Soane and explored his fascinating collection, which included Greek artefacts such as decorated vases, statues of important gods and goddesses, and objects linked to events that still influence our modern world today, including the Olympic Games. The visit helped to bring their topic learning to life and deepen their understanding of Ancient Greek culture and beliefs. The children were particularly interested in learning new facts about the Greek gods and goddesses, especially the goddess Nike and her alternative name, meaning 'Victory'. During the workshop, the children focused on

Ancient Greek architecture. They explored how temples were designed and learned key architectural vocabulary, including Doric and Ionic columns. The children thoroughly enjoyed the day, especially discovering new facts, exploring artefacts, and learning through the interactive activities

CORE VALUE AWARD - FEBRUARY 2026

The value of the month for February was **RESLIENT**. Congratulations to:

Reception:	**RK Liyana**& **RN Nailah**
Year 1:	**1B Rayyan** & **1C Zakariya**
Year 2:	**2S Amelia** & **2T Yusra**
Year 3:	**3E Hazira** & **3H Sara**
Year 4:	**4M Anas** & **4O Umayma**
Year 5:	**5A Matiha** & **5H Arshita**
Year 6:	**6D Arka** & **6K Maisha**

YEAR 1 VISIT CUTTY SARK

Year 1 had a fun visit to the Cutty Sark for the Sea Adventures workshop in February. They explored the ship, learning about its journeys around the world. The children saw the deck and inside of the ship and took part in activities like knot-tying. They also listened to stories about sailors and their adventures at sea. It was a great way for the children to learn about life on the ship and the exciting world of sea travel!

YEAR 2 VISIT HORNIMAN MUSEUM

Year 2 enjoyed an inspiring visit to the African Galleries at the Horniman Museum this month! As mini-explorers, the children discovered vibrant masquerade masks, traditional instruments, and historic bronze carvings. It was a wonderful way to bring their learning to life through sketching and discovery, exploring the rich culture and diverse traditions of the African continent.

YEAR 3 VISIT YOUNG V&A MUSEUM

This half term, Year 3 visited the Young VA museum. The children took part in the Hero Arm workshop, which linked to their topic learning about simple machines. During the workshop, they learned all about robotic arms, including how they can help people. The children particularly enjoyed designing their own robotic inventions. To round off their trip to the museum, they explored the imagine and play galleries. The children thoroughly enjoyed their visit to the Young VA museum and can't wait for what their next school trip.

YEAR 6 VISIT CENTRE OF CELLS

Year 6 were lucky enough to visit the Centre of the Cell this half term to support their learning about the circulatory system. The children learnt about the different part of the system and the journey our blood goes through around our body. They also discussed the illnesses and conditions that can effect our heart and blood vessels and how a healthy lifestyle can help to avoid these. As a bonus, they also learnt about how the circulatory system has adapted in other species from the animal kingdom.

Back at school, our year 6 pupils were visited by a medical professional this term to teach us about first aid and emergency responses. We learnt about the different emergency services and what they are all to be used for as well as how to contact them. The workshop also supported our understanding of what we should do if we are ever in an emergency situation or find someone who is having a medical emergency so that we can assist, including calling for an ambulance, putting someone in the recovery position and administering CPR.

LUNAR NEW YEAR

Our nursery celebrated Lunar New Year with a fun day full of music and movement. The children took part in an exciting dragon dance parade, working together to carry and "wave" the dragon as it travelled through the nursery. We also enjoyed singing festive songs, explored instruments and shared enjoyment.

Lunar New Year begins on 17 February 2026, welcoming the Year of the Horse. The dragon is a symbol of good fortune and positive wishes for the year ahead.

RAMADAN 2026

As Ramadan is due to start next week, Year 5 & 6 parents have been contacted regarding arrangements for fasting. We wish those families taking part in the festival, Ramadan Kareem!

YEAR 5 VISIT BRITISH MUSEUM

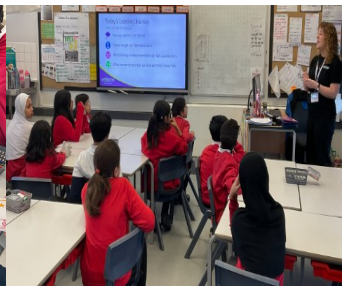
Year 5 went on an exciting trip to the British Museum as part of their topic on the Anglo Saxons and Vikings. The children were very enthusiastic and curious to learn more about history outside the classroom. One of the highlights of the visit was exploring the Sutton Hoo room, where they saw famous Anglo Saxon artefacts, including the magnificent helmet and ancient treasures discovered in the burial site. The class also took part in an interactive iPad tour which used AI to guide them around the exhibition. The AI tour provided interesting facts, asked them questions, and helped them understand how people lived in Anglo Saxon and Viking times. The trip was both fun and educational, and the children returned to school inspired by everything they had seen and learned.

RECEPTION VISIT DOCKLANDS MUSEUM

This half term in Reception, our topic has been Transport. To support their learning, the children enjoyed two exciting trips: a walk to our local canal and a visit to the Docklands Museum. On our canal trip to Three Mills Island, the children saw a variety of canal boats and other transport such as trains, cars, buses and bicycles. They were especially fascinated to learn that some canal boats are people's homes.

For our second trip, Reception travelled by train to the Docklands Museum—an exciting train journey. Along the way, they spotted different types of water transport. At the museum, they explored exhibitions including Sailor Town, where they learned about sailors' lives and how the London Underground was built. The children showed excellent listening skills and were fully engaged throughout both trips.

YEAR 5 EQUALITEACH WORKSHOP



Year 5 pupils took part in an engaging and thought-provoking workshop called "Think!" delivered by Equal-iTeach.
In a world where we are constantly surrounded by information—both online and offline—it is more important than ever for our young people to develop strong critical thinking skills. The session was designed to help pupils recognize stereotypes and understand how misinformation can sometimes lead to prejudice. The workshop was highly interactive and encouraged the children to challenge assumptions by looking at how first impressions aren't always accurate and why it's important to look deeper. They then explored how information can be skewed or taken out of context and discussed the impact that stereotypes can have on individuals and how we can work together to create a more inclusive school community.

STAR CITIZEN—SPRING A 2026

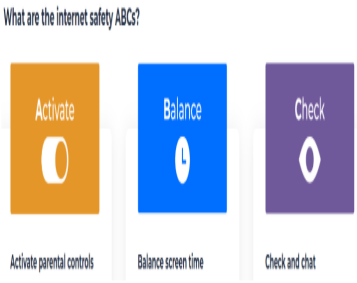
We would like to congratulate the following pupils for achieving the star citizen award this term. Well Done and keep up the good work.

Reception:	**RK Ayman** & **RN Umar**
Year 1:	**1B Sara** & **1C Aadila**
Year 2:	**2S Nuraiz** & **2T Eliza**
Year 3:	**3E Ahil** & **3H Ayman**
Year 4:	**4M Amirah** & **4O Ayman**
Year 5:	**5A Isra** & **5H Sairah**
Year 6:	**6D Arka** & **6K Maisha**

YEAR 5 & 6 FOOTBALL MARNER LEAGUE UPDATE

A huge well done to the year 5&6 boys who were selected to represent Old Palace at the prestigious 5&6 football league that is held at Marner school. It was definitely a challenge for the boys, however they accepted it, adapted well, and most importantly worked as a team. Their efforts were recognised and commended by the coaches of the competing schools and that says a lot about the way our boys conducted themselves each week. Although we didn't get to bring the trophy this time round (finishing third place), their hard work has not gone unnoticed and we are proud of them all as they showed the ability to grow together and stick together through adversity that is expected in sport. Once again, well done to all of the

ONLINE SAFETY



With the holidays coming up, children may want to spend more time on their devices. This is a great time to set clear rules for screen time and think about the 'quality' of what children are doing online. The right amount of screen time will be different for everyone, and will depend on your family's lifestyle. Children might enjoy a wide range of activities on their devices, like homework, online games and interaction with friends, which can support a young persons wellbeing. However screen time should not replace sleeping, eating, daily exercise, or get in the way of other hobbies. It is important that children stop using their devices one hour before bed. A family agreement is a great way to start a conversation with your whole family about how you all use the internet, and to start discussions together around how to behave in a positive way when online, whether this is at home, at school or at a friend's to support their digital wellbeing. You can access this template HERE
This is also a good time to ensure your devices are set up correctly with parental controls that are appropriate for your child. One issue parents usually face with this is that this can differ depending on the device. To help, Internet Matters have a simple guide which you can follow as part of their ABC Checklist. You can find a full explanation, set up guides and advice HERE
Please keep a close eye on your child/ren's online activity and gaming this holiday to help ensure that all pupils remain safe.

YEAR 4 & 5 NIGHT AT THE PANTOMIME

This half term year 4 and 5 had the opportunity to go and see the pantomime 'Cinderella' at the Peacock theatre. PWC, in collaboration with Sadler Wells, kindly put on the event and gave Old Palace 90 children's tickets to attend. They also provided the transport to and from the theatre! The children had an incredible time at the show. They were fascinated by the incredible talent of all the actors, actresses and dancers! They enjoyed interacting with the characters, cheering, booing (at the baddies), singing along and calling out to Buttons every time he made an appearance! It was a wonderful experience for our pupils, giving them some inspiration for their own singing and acting. We are really thankful to PWC for providing this experience for our pupils.