



The Bellbird Newsletter

Dear Parents and Carers,

Headteacher's Update

I can hardly believe that it has already been four weeks since I joined the school as Headteacher – time has flown by! These first weeks have been incredibly enjoyable and rewarding, and I have loved getting to know both the children and the staff. This week it has been fantastic to see our wonderful teachers and pupils in action when senior leadership team colleagues and I have been completing lesson observations.

I would like to take a moment to thank all the parents who have offered their support for the upcoming Parent Working Party on Saturday, 8th February 9-12. I am overwhelmed by your kindness and generosity. Thanks to your help, we will be able to make some important improvements around the school, enhancing the working environment for your children. It is going to be a busy but very productive morning, and I am looking forward to seeing all of the great work that we will achieve together.

On a lighter note, we have also received some lovely new posh shoe brushes for the school, so fingers crossed the weather will start to brighten up soon! This will allow the children to get back outside and enjoy the wooden gym trial once again. I know they have been looking forward to it.

Thank you again for all your support, and I look forward to seeing what we can achieve together as a school community in the coming weeks.

Parent Working Party – Saturday, 8th February

Our school thrives on the strength of our community, and we are reaching out to you for a little extra help as we tackle an important project. On Saturday, 8th February, from 9 am to 12 pm, we'll be hosting a Parent Working Party to repaint the lower sections of the hall and corridors—and we'd love for you to join us!

Why are we asking for your help? Our school budget is tighter than ever, which means every small act of generosity can make a huge difference. By volunteering your time, you'll directly contribute to creating a brighter, fresher environment for all our children—a space they can feel proud of.

All painting materials will be provided, so all you need to bring is a willingness to pitch in. To keep you energised, we'll have endless cups of tea and, if we're lucky, some bacon rolls too! Even if you can spare just half an hour, your contribution will make a real impact. This is also a fantastic opportunity to meet other parents, spend time with your children, and show them how working together as a community can achieve great things. Children are more than welcome to join in!

If you're able to assist, please let a member of the office team know. Your support means the world to us and to our pupils. Let's come together to brighten our school—every brushstroke counts!

Parent Governor Election: Make Your Voice Heard

Following Monday's email, we are excited to announce that four parents have stepped forward as candidates for the Parent Governor vacancy on The Bellbird Primary School Governing Body. This is a wonderful opportunity for parents to have a say in shaping the future of our school.

Each candidate has submitted a letter of application, outlining their experience and vision for the role. We encourage all parents to read these letters carefully and select the candidate who best represents your views and aspirations for our school community.

How to Vote On Monday, you will have received a ballot paper via email. Please use this to cast your vote. Completed ballot papers can be returned to the school office either by email or as a hard copy.

Deadline for Voting The closing date for nominations is Wednesday, 5th February 2025. Make sure your vote is submitted before this date to ensure it is counted.

Your participation is vital in helping us elect a Parent Governor who will contribute to the continued success of The Bellbird Primary School. Thank you for your support and engagement in this important process. Any questions, do ask a member of our office team.

School Meals

We will be introducing a new way of pre ordering lunches from **Wednesday, 5th February 2025**. If your child would like a school lunch, you will need to ensure that you book this in advance.

To do this, please log into the School Gateway,
click on Pupils meals,
click on day you wish to choose,
choose from menu choices,
click on book selected days. You must remember to do this or it will not be saved.

Parents/carers will need to book at least **one day in advance** and children will no longer be able to choose their lunch in the morning. If your child has left their packed lunch at home, you will receive a phone call and be asked to bring it in. For children with special menus, please refer to your copy of your child's menu and order the equivalent colour preference on School Gateway.

Join Our FABs Team!

Who are we?

Friends at Bellbird School (FABs) is our school's parent/teacher association. We're a small but dedicated group of parents and staff who organize fundraising events and support school activities.

What do we do?

Our goal is to bring together children, families, staff, and the wider community through fun and engaging events. The money we raise goes directly toward providing essential resources and enhancing learning opportunities for every child.

What have we achieved?

With the help of our amazing volunteers, we've made a real difference. From improving the school library with new books and furniture to hosting author visits, theater performances, and funding swimming lessons for Years 2, 4, and 6, our contributions continue to benefit all students. We've even added a new PA system to the school hall!

Want to help?

If you're interested in joining, please leave a message for Mr. Andy Irons at the school office or speak to a member of the School Leadership team at the gate. We'd love to have you on board!

The Importance of Reading with Your Child

Reading with your child at home is one of the most valuable activities you can do to support their learning. For our Reception (YR) children, daily reading is essential in reinforcing the sounds and graphemes they are learning at school. This practice helps build their confidence and supports their reading development.

As your child progresses through the school, the expectation is that they read at least three times a week. During these sessions, it's important to check for understanding and discuss the story. Your child's reading record book

contains some ideas on questions you can ask your child when they are reading to you. Asking thoughtful questions will deepen their comprehension and foster a love for reading. You can ask questions like:

- *Can you tell me what has happened so far?*
- *What do you think will happen next?*
- *What type of character is...? Are they kind, rude, happy, miserable? How do we know this?*
- *How do you think the character feels at this point, and how do you know?*
- *Which is your favourite page and can you tell me why?*
- *Does this book/story remind you of any other books that you have read?*

These discussions not only improve understanding but also help broaden your child's interests and vocabulary. We also ask that parents sign their child/ren's reading record book after each reading session. Please only add comments if you feel that it is helpful. There is no expectation that parents write comments every time they listen to their child read. Please remember, reading records will be checked at school on a weekly basis.

In September 2024, the school introduced Fisher Family Trust reading fluency assessments for some of the children. These are used nationally to assess reading fluency. These have shown that many of our children who are priority readers are not reading at the rate that is appropriate for their age.

The National Expectation is that by the end of each year group, the children should be reading an age appropriate book at **approximately** the following rates:

EYFS	25 words per minute
Year 1	60 words per minute
Year 2	90 words per minute
Year 3	110 words per minute
Year 4	140 words per minute
Year 5	150 words per minute
Year 6	150 – 200 words per minute

Pace of reading of course is only one indicator of fluency. Both accuracy and prosody need to be measured too. By reading regularly with your child at home parents can greatly help with the development of all aspects of reading fluency. The more a child reads to an adult at home, the more likely they are to improve their fluency in reading.

Thank you for your continued support in nurturing your child's love of reading!

Why School Attendance Matters: A Message for Parents

Attendance at school is vital for your child's academic success, wellbeing, and development. Regular attendance supports educational, social, and economic outcomes, while also fostering positive peer relationships that improve mental health.

Long-Term Benefits of Attendance Being present prepares children for adulthood and boosts future success. Students with high attendance consistently achieve better results. In 2019, 84% of Key Stage 2 pupils with 100% attendance met expected standards, compared to 40% of persistently absent pupils.

What is Persistent or Severe Absence?

- **Persistently absent:** Missing over 10% of school sessions.
- **Severely absent:** Missing over 50% of sessions.

Although absence rates have improved since the pandemic, reducing absences remains a priority to ensure every child benefits fully from school.

When to Keep Your Child Home Children with mild colds, like a minor cough or sore throat, can usually attend school. Keep your child home if they have a high temperature (38°C or above). Schools have guidance to help you decide, and additional illness advice is available on the NHS website.

Let's Work Together Whilst it is understandable that some children genuinely need to be off school, for many others, this is just not the case. Your support is crucial for improving attendance. Together, we can help every child reach their potential. If you need assistance, contact your child's school

Early Arrivers

I write with concerns about certain Y5 and Y6 pupils arriving up to 25 minutes before the school gates open. This early arrival has led to disruptive behaviour and use of the bike shelter on the KS1 path, leaving parents with pushchairs standing in the rain.

To ensure fairness and safety, I kindly request that your child arrives no more than 5-10 minutes before the gates open. There is no staff supervision before this time. Please also remind your child to use the bike shelter only for its intended purpose and be considerate of families with young children. Thank you for your cooperation. If you have concerns, please contact the school office.

National College guide Youtube

YouTube is a video-sharing social media platform that allows billions of people around the world to watch, share and upload their own videos with a vast range of content – including sport, entertainment, education and lots more. It's a superb space for people to consume content that they're interested in. As a result, this astronomically popular platform has had a huge social impact: influencing online culture on a global scale and creating new celebrities.

In our guide, you'll find tips on avoiding potential risks such as connecting with strangers, inappropriate content and high visibility.

Key dates for your diary:

Event	Date
Year 5 Class Assembly	Thursday 13 th February @ 9:15am
Parent Consultation Evening – Zoom (School Comms to follow with details)	Tuesday 25 th February 3.30-7.00pm
Parent Consultation Day time – In person (School Comms to follow with details)	Thursday 27 th February 8.00 – 11.00am
Doves SEND parent consultations (School Comms to follow with details)	Wednesday 5 th March 3.30-5.30pm
SEND Parent Consultation. (School Comms to follow with details)	Thursday 6 th March 3.30-5.30pm
FABS Discos YR, KS1 and KS2	Friday 7 th March – more details to follow
Y4 West Stow trip	Friday 21 st March
Cambridge University School Day	Tuesday 25 th March for KS2 pupils.
Year 3 Class Assembly	Thursday 27 th March @ 9:15am
FABS Quiz	Friday 2 nd May – more details to follow
Year 1 Class Assembly	Wednesday 21 st May @ 9:15am
Year 2 Class Assembly	Tuesday 8 th July @ 9:15am

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'JP', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mr James Puxley

Headteacher