



MAPESBURY SCHOOL

AUTUMN 2 2025 NEWSLETTER

Our New Speech and Language Therapist

Hi, I'm Siobhain the new Speech & Language Therapist (SaLT).

I will be working here at Mapesbury School on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays this year. I have been a SaLT for the past 22 years, working with students from 2 years old to 22 years old, with a very wide variety of language, communication and wider thinking needs and strengths. I even worked on this same site for 8 years when it was a centre for teaching thinking skills to students of all ages.

I love to help students to achieve their communication and learning potential and to grow in confidence in themselves and their abilities. I look forward to meeting you all.





Our New HLTA – Thomas

Kia Ora! I have worked in a similar role in both New Zealand and the UK. I joined Mapesbury in November. I am from New Zealand and came over to London in April. I studied Psychology and Criminology at university and since passing, I have been working in a range of SEN schools and residential settings, with both adults and children with a range of different needs. I love travelling to new countries, watching football and Dragon's Den.

I am so excited to continue to work with this amazing team.



Message from the Headteacher

Another half term has come and gone and now it's time for mince pies, dark evenings and, if you are very lucky, time spent with family and loved ones!

We have come a long way here at Mapesbury school this term. The pupils and the staff team have grown considerably, there have been coffee mornings for existing parents and open mornings for prospective parents and loads of fun activities for the pupils to enjoy.

As we grow, we aim to continue to support our pupils in an individualised and tailored way. We strive to ensure that all pupils achieve whether it is through improvement in behaviour, attendance or engagement in lessons.

We close the Autumn term with 23 pupils and a sense of achievement in knowing that we have supported all pupils and their families to remember how joyful it feels to be a part of a community. The feeling of belonging that our pupils deserve is tangible and if we can help all pupils to be the best version of themselves then we would have done a great job!

I wish you a restful and peaceful break and a new year filled with joy and prosperity!

Best wishes,

Adam De Vecchi



KS2 – Merlin Class

Class Teacher – Mike

Teaching Assistant - Kate

In November, Mapesbury School announced the addition of a new KS2 class - which we have named Merlin Class.

Merlin is led by Mike and Kate and aims to introduce a calm and structured learning environment where all children can thrive and enjoy learning.



In terms of our class curriculum this term we are learning about multiplication and fractions in maths and in English we are studying the book *Float* using a new learning technique called The Write Stuff.

The Write Stuff involves interactive learning that is a lot of fun for our students as it also improves their communication and social skills.

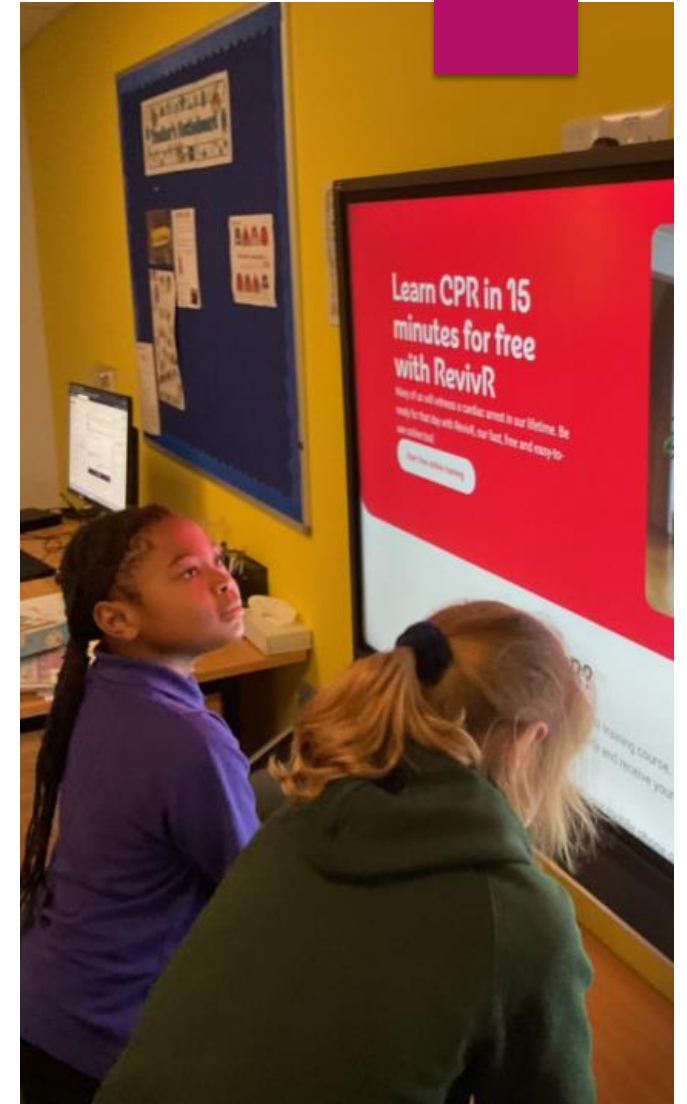
Art, Food Tech, Music, PE and Science are also subjects that our students greatly enjoy learning about - as it gives them a well balanced curriculum that is structured to stimulate their thinking and problem solving skills.



Extra curriculum

In addition to the core academic subjects, Merlin will offer all its students an opportunity to learn first-aid which is an amazing life skill to have.

Mike and Kate also encourage their students to learn about nature and their local environment so that they can gain a healthy respect for life around them. Indeed, one of their projects involves building bird Boxes around the school - which is a really cool thing to do.



KS2 – Puffin class

ELENA MOINESCU – TEACHER

Puffin class have been very busy this term, with lots of learning and fun experiences. We got to know each other a little better, made new friends, worked with new people and improved our school routines and focus. It is an absolute delight to look at our children and see all the learning journey and the progress that has been made, as well as the creativity they showed across the lessons.



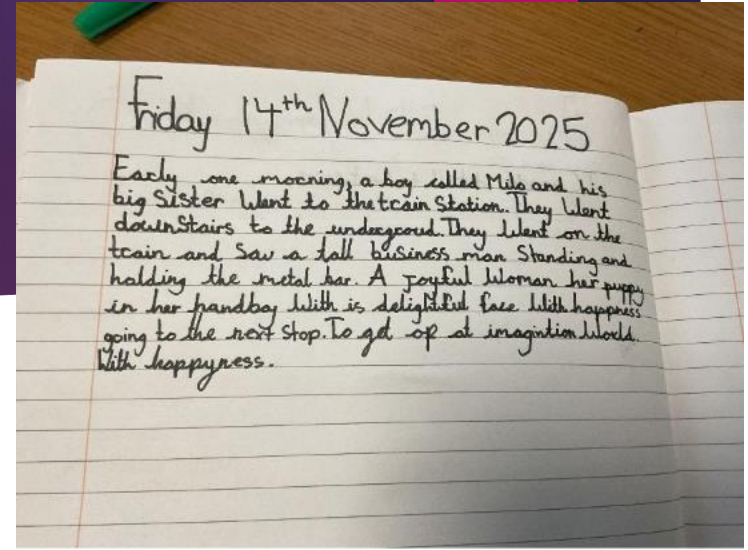


Our **timetable** has also changed to include even more exciting activities such as **Games and Social Skills, Construction and Sensory trail** sessions. This enabled everybody to join in and settle down better, including during afternoon lessons.

English



Children have put in amazing effort in **English** lessons, both in **Reading and Writing**. We explored the book *Milo* *imagines the world*, using our own imagination and prediction skills to learn about the **characters** and to see things from their **point of view**. Some amazing **vocabulary choices** and **developed sentence structures** are just an example of the hard work put into our learning, which reflects in our books. We particularly enjoyed the pyramid writing, colourful semantics and using the book as starting point **to compare** transport in different countries.



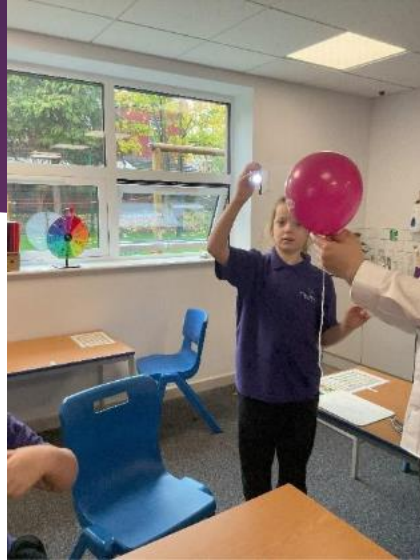
Maths

Puffin class really reach for the stars in **Maths** class, as all children became more confident and started to challenge themselves more. This term we built on our understanding of **number and place value** to develop **secure calculation strategies, both mental and written**. This is reflected in the high standard work produced and the children's eagerness to push their learning further every day. Some of us have even started to explore **algebra** and KS3 equations-way to go!



Science

The **Earth and Space** topic helped us take part in **Science** lessons that were informative and fun at the same time, with many opportunities for children to share their knowledge and apply practical, hands-on learning. Some memorable experiences include **making snow**, creating **a representation of the solar system** or making **a simulation of an eclipse**. Many of our children made valuable contributions to class discussions, bringing in their own interest or personal knowledge.



Life Skills

Lots of good teamwork took place in **Life Skills** lessons, where we focused on practical tasks learning about **money**. We worked on finding out about different ways to pay, saving money and even **budgeting**. This became a very interesting practical task when our class collected enough stars to have a Mc Donald's meal as **reward**. We researched the price of our choices and checked if it fits in the allocated budget- which made the food even more appealing!





Extra Curriculum

Lots of our class discussions were based around the topic of **rules and responsibilities**, including showing respect and empathy for everybody. We reflected on what goes well in our class and what could make things even better. Together, we created a set of class systems to recognise good choices and reduce unwanted behaviours.

A lesson that children particularly enjoyed was learning about **anti-bullying**; all the class members worked beautifully together creating their own design for friendship bracelets and sharing their experiences.

Puffins demonstrated good **competitive spirit** developing their **typing skills**. Although this was tricky in the beginning, it taught children to be resilient and to take on the next level challenge, always improving and trying to beat their personal best.

Food Technology in KS2

Puffin students in KS2 have shown that, despite their young age, they possess excellent skills and maturity in the Food Technology kitchen. They have demonstrated a strong understanding of health and safety rules and consistently wear the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) while preparing a range of delicious recipes.

Throughout their lessons, students have explored basic cooking skills by making puff pastry biscuits and cupcakes, developing confidence in measuring, mixing and baking. Towards the end of the term, they took on a new challenge by learning how to safely use a frying pan to cook chicken for fajitas. This was an exciting step forward in their practical learning.

Although some students were initially nervous about the oil splattering, they showed great resilience and responsibility. They learned when to stop, how to ask for help, and how to use kitchen appliances safely and correctly. Their willingness to listen, follow instructions, and support one another was impressive.





Art in KS2

Fantasy Towers in Art!

Puffin Class had an exciting and imaginative experience in art lessons with Brian, who led a creative project focused on designing and building Science Fiction and Fantasy towers. Pupils explored bold ideas, unusual shapes and imaginative worlds, drawing inspiration from futuristic cities and magical landscapes. The project encouraged everyone to think creatively, experiment with materials, and take pride in turning their ideas into striking 3D structures.

Throughout the project, Brian supported pupils in developing their artistic skills while also building confidence and perseverance. Pupils learned how to plan their designs, problem-solve as they constructed their towers and work collaboratively by sharing ideas and techniques. The finished towers were a fantastic display of Puffin Class's creativity and imagination, showcasing their enthusiasm for art and their ability to bring fantastical ideas to life.

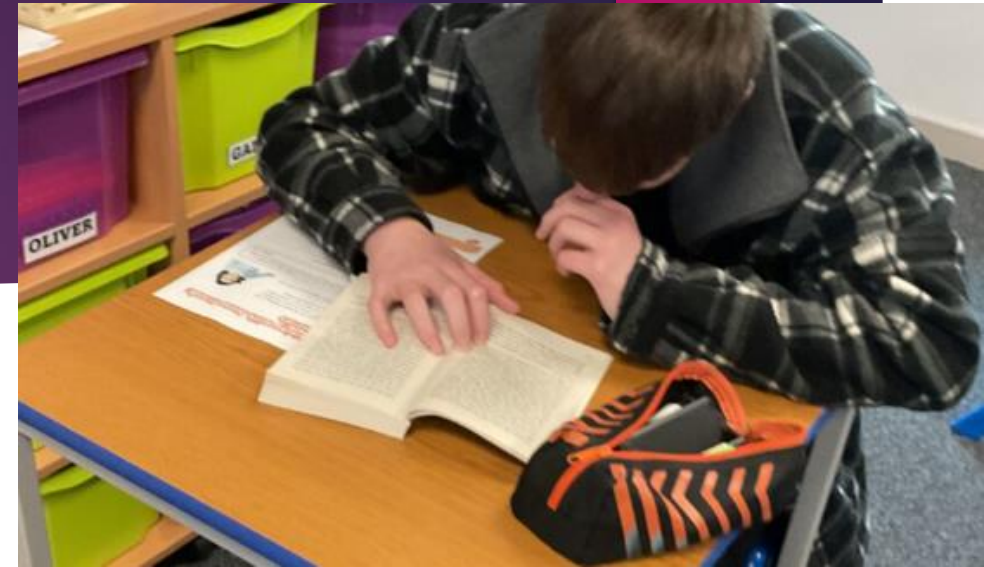
KS3 – Pelican class

MARIA LOCORRIERE -
TEACHER



English in Pelican Class

This term, Pelican students studied two powerful literary works: *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque and *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Inspired by their curiosity about science and a growing interest in the World Wars, students explored different perspectives on conflict through literature. They examined the use of an omniscient narrator and soldiers' personal viewpoints, applying these techniques in their own creative writing. To enrich their learning, the students visited the Imperial War Museum, where they enthusiastically explored the role of Great Britain and the lasting impact of the wars.





Pelican Enrichment Project Christmas Fair

This term's enrichment project was centred around Christmas and proved to be a great success. Students were actively involved in buying decorations and selecting themed treats for the tuck shop, as well as helping to set up the Christmas Fair.

One of our students, known for her excellent music taste, took responsibility for creating the Christmas playlist, which helped to create a festive atmosphere throughout the event. Almost all members of the Student Council were given roles within the fair, working together to support Supriya and Maria in ensuring everything ran smoothly.

The Christmas Fair was dedicated to *Save the Children*, a charity that supports children in need. Students showed great enthusiasm by wearing festive Christmas jumpers and generously donating money in support of the charity. It was wonderful to see such strong teamwork, creativity and community spirit on display.

Food Technology in Pelican



Year 9 students have been developing more advanced cooking skills in their Food Technology lessons this term. They have confidently explored how to season chicken effectively, experimenting with a variety of spices and flavour combinations to enhance their dishes. Students also worked with noodles and rice to create a range of Asian-inspired meals, learning about balance of flavours, presentation and safe food-handling practices along the way.

To celebrate the Christmas season, students turned their attention to baking, creating a selection of delicious Christmas cookies. This activity allowed them to further practise key baking skills such as accurate measuring, mixing techniques, oven safety and time management. The festive session was a great opportunity for students to express creativity while producing beautifully finished treats.

Overall, students demonstrated enthusiasm, teamwork and growing confidence in the kitchen.



The Imperial War Museum

This term, students travelled across London using public transport to visit the Imperial War Museum, developing confidence and independence as they navigated the city together. The museum provided a rich and engaging learning experience, allowing students to explore a wide range of artefacts from the First and Second World Wars.

During the visit, students asked thoughtful questions and engaged with members of the museum team, who shared valuable insights into what daily life was like during wartime. Older students also had the opportunity to explore the Holocaust galleries, which offered deeper understanding and meaningful context to their current reading of *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

The museum's interactive displays encouraged curiosity and discussion, making the historical content both accessible and impactful. Alongside deepening their understanding of historical events, students practised important life skills such as teamwork, communication, and responsible travel.



KS3 – Toucan class

BRIAN
MCGINNIS
- TEACHER



Toucan Class

Toucan Class has really come together this term, developing a strong sense of friendship, teamwork and mutual respect. Pupils have shown growing confidence in working with one another, supporting their classmates, and celebrating each other's successes. The positive atmosphere in the classroom has helped everyone feel safe, valued and ready to learn, making Toucan Class a happy and welcoming place to be.

PSHE

Brian and Fazila have played a key role in nurturing this environment by thoughtfully breaking up lessons with calming meditations and mindful activities. These include quiet colouring sessions, gentle movement, and moments of reflection that help pupils reset, refocus, and regulate their emotions. In PSHE, learning was taken outdoors to make the most of nature, where pupils explored their thoughts and feelings in a peaceful natural setting. Being outside encouraged thoughtful discussion, creativity, and connection, showing how learning can be enriched when pupils are given space to slow down and engage with the world around them.





Food Technology

Students in Toucan Class have shown a real enjoyment and enthusiasm for cooking during their Food Technology lessons. They have explored a wide variety of cooking skills and techniques, including baking, frying, and mixing, while preparing dishes such as fajitas, flapjacks, cupcakes, and many other delicious treats. These activities have helped students build confidence in the kitchen and develop their independence.

A strong focus has also been placed on kitchen safety and hygiene. Students have learned the importance of wearing the correct personal protective equipment (PPE), including hairnets and aprons and have demonstrated responsible behaviour when using kitchen appliances safely and correctly.

In addition, students have worked extremely well together, showing excellent cooperation and teamwork. They support one another during practical tasks, share responsibilities and take pride in keeping the workspace clean and organised.

KS3 – Flamingo Class

IBI ALAKIJA - TEACHER



English and Occupational Therapy



In Flamingo class this term, we did a lot of work in English on Robin Hood and most of the class were able to name the characters from the story and recall some aspects of the story using visuals. Pupils learnt new words such as legend, archer and outlaw and practised role-playing Robin Hood, creating likely speeches for the character.

Priya, the school occupational therapist, began having weekly sessions with our class, some of the pictures from her sensory diet sessions show pupils thoroughly engaged in activities provided. Pupils were given shaving foam, kinetic sand, and different types of sensory objects to explore extending opportunities for fine motor skills development and attention.

Performing Arts and Enrichment Project

In performing Arts each pupil made their own puppet show, using shadow puppets of animals, which everyone found fascinating and produced lots of excitement. Pupils were able to demonstrate how to manipulate their puppet and showcase to other pupils their own mini play.

We had big plans to finish our class Enrichment project on winter wonderland, however, though we did lots of work on it, we have not completed the project. We hope to complete this project in the new term and show the completed project in its glory later.





Food Technology

Year 7 students in Flamingo Class have shown great enthusiasm and enjoyment in their Food Technology lessons this term. They are becoming increasingly independent in the kitchen and no longer need reminding about essential hygiene routines, such as washing their hands before starting practical work.

Students have explored a wide range of sweet and savoury recipes, including cupcakes, chocolate chip cookies, flapjacks, and homemade pizzas. Through these activities, they have developed important skills such as reading and following recipes carefully, identifying the correct ingredients, and selecting the appropriate equipment for each task.

The class has also demonstrated excellent responsibility and pride in their learning environment. Students take great care when cleaning the Food Technology room, ensuring workspaces are tidy and equipment is washed and stored correctly. Their teamwork, organisation and positive attitude have contributed to a calm and productive learning atmosphere.

KS2 Physical Education

Key Stage 2 – Hockey

This term, our Key Stage 2 pupils spent time developing their **core hockey skills** while learning the **essential rules of the game**. We focused on safe stick handling, accurate passing, controlled dribbling and moving into space as part of a team. These activities helped pupils build confidence and improve their coordination in an enjoyable and supportive setting.

We worked carefully through key rules such as playing safely, respecting others and understanding how to take turns during small-sided games. Pupils were encouraged to communicate clearly, support their teammates and celebrate each other's efforts.

Throughout the term, we also linked our learning to the values of **Humble United**, highlighting teamwork, respect and positive behaviour. Pupils were reminded that being part of a team is not only about skills but about showing kindness, effort and pride in everything they do.

Overall, this has been a positive and engaging term where pupils strengthened both their hockey abilities and their personal development.



KS3 Physical Education

Basketball: Developing Skills, Confidence and Character KS3

This term, our focus in basketball has been to help pupils build their **fundamental skills** while also developing a genuine **enjoyment of the game**. Alongside learning the basics, pupils were encouraged to be **competitive in a positive way**, showing **humility**, respect and good teamwork.

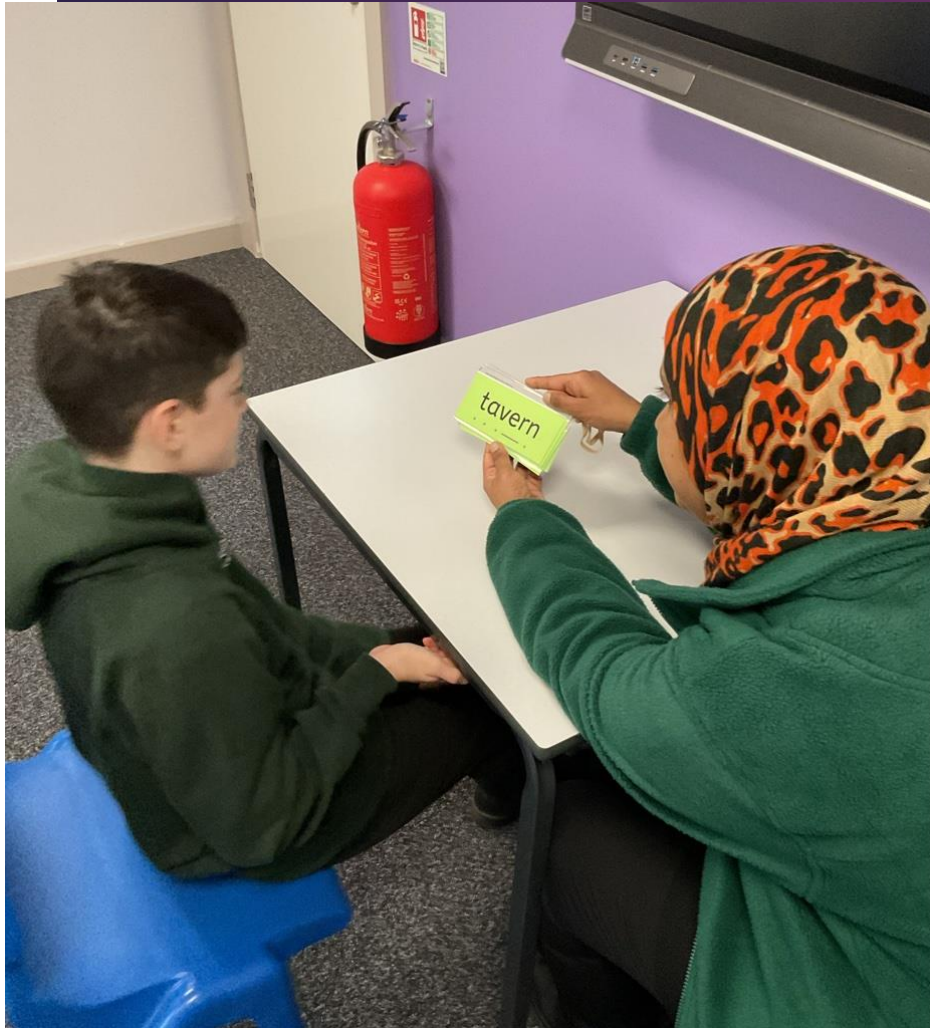
We emphasised that in sport, the goal is not only about winning or being the best, but about **trying, practising and putting in effort**. Pupils learned that the real purpose of PE is to **have fun, learn new skills and feel proud of their progress**.

Through **basketball matches and shooting competitions**, pupils experienced learning through play, celebrated each other's successes and developed confidence by supporting their friends.

This term, we also formed our school team under the name **“Humble United.”** Pupils had the opportunity to learn what it means to **sign a team contract**, be part of a group and feel the pride of representing their school. This experience helped them understand responsibility, teamwork and belonging in a supportive, inclusive environment.



Read Write Inc. Fresh Start



Phonics at Mapesbury

This half term we have integrated Phonics into our curriculum. After completing the phonics baseline test, identified children were given their own individual Challenge points on the Fresh Start programme (part of Read, Write, Inc. reading scheme). Since introducing this reading scheme, 20 minutes has been put aside each day for each child to have a 1:1 session with a member of staff. Almost all children have made good progress and have moved at least 1 Challenge point nearer to completion of the Reading Scheme.

Occupational Therapy

This term, Occupational Therapy (OT) input has focused on building positive therapeutic relationships with the children and introducing the role of OT to both staff and students at a Universal level.

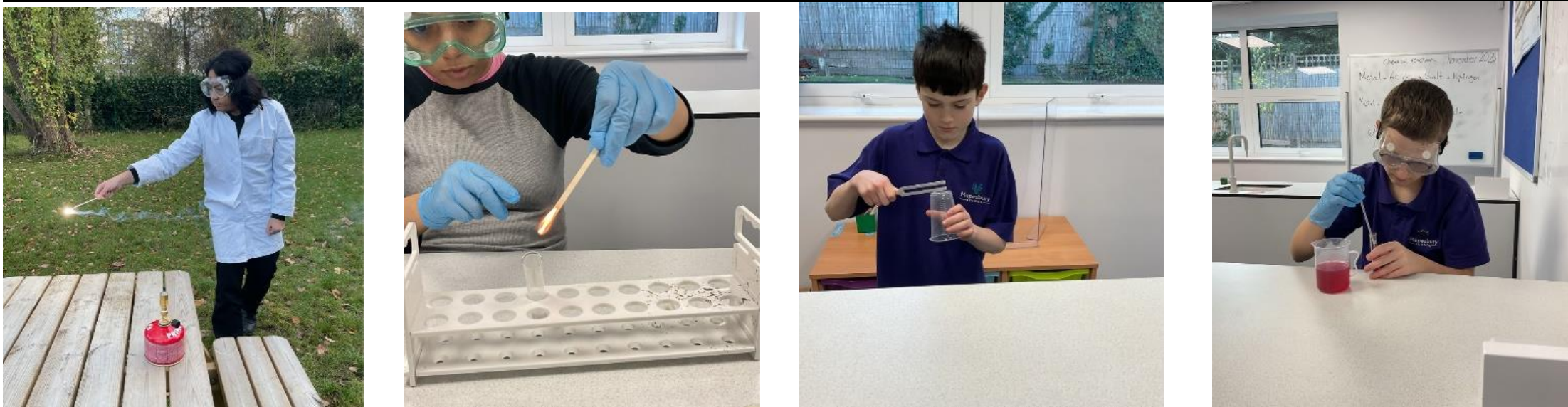
Students have engaged in and particularly enjoyed a range of sensory play experiences, exploring different sensory mediums such as shaving foam, sand, slime and paint. Alongside this, fine motor skills were naturally embedded through activities such as making friendship bracelets, tool use (e.g. screwdrivers) for construction tasks to support life skills and using various cutters with kinetic sand and playdough. These playful, hands-on activities have supported engagement, regulation and skill development in a fun and meaningful way.

I look forward to building on this work next term and would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a lovely Christmas break and a Happy New Year!

Priya (Mapesbury School OT)

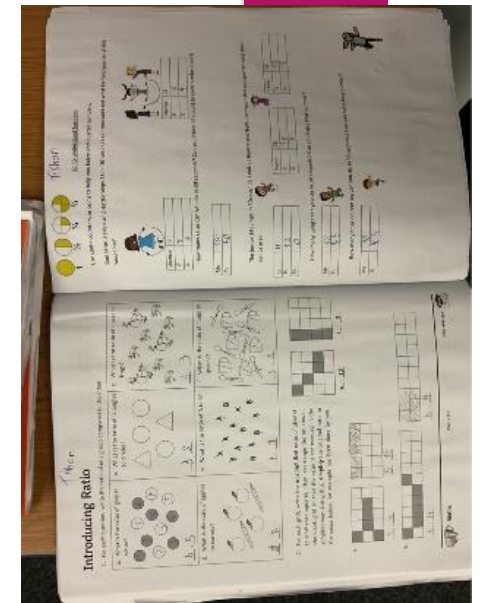
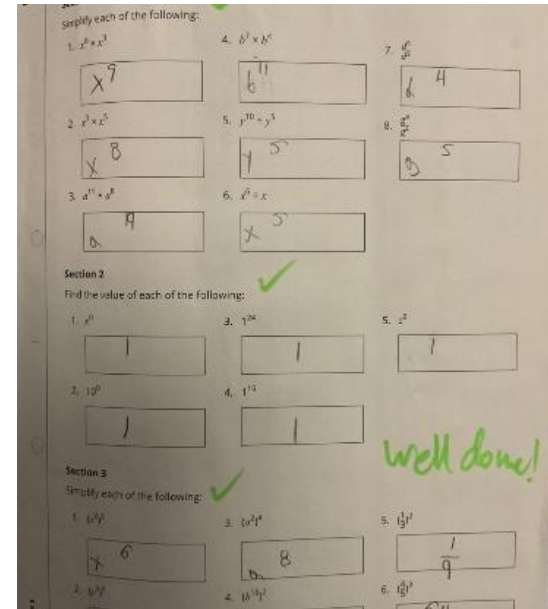
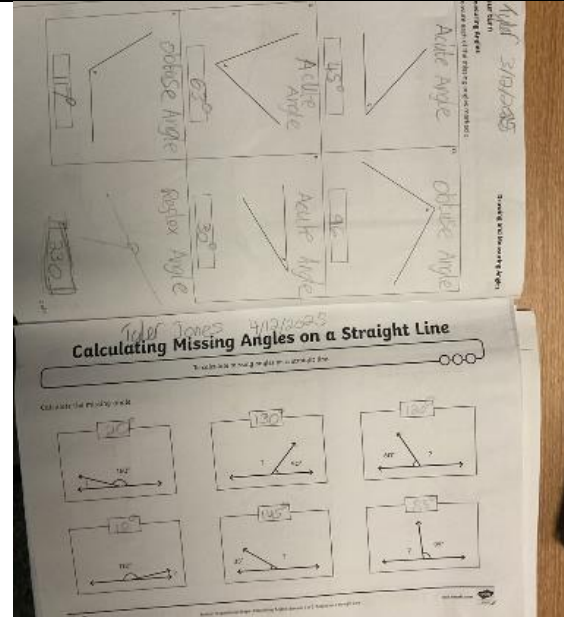
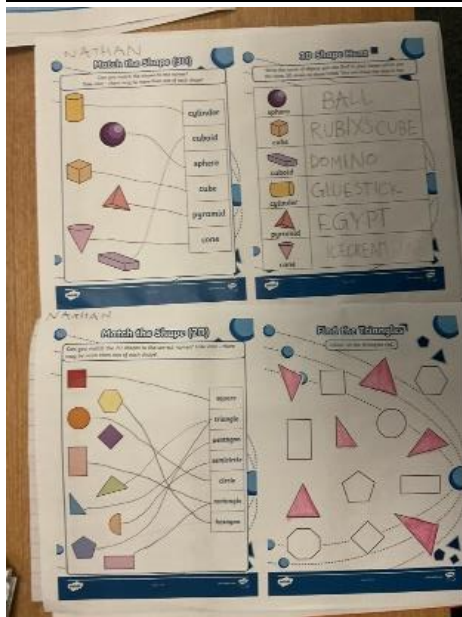


Science in KS3



This term in science, students have been busy exploring and investigating the world around them through a range of exciting, hands-on experiments. They built simple electrical circuits, tested everyday substances to see whether they were acidic or alkaline, and observed chemical reactions through fizzing, colour changes, and gas production. Pupils also travelled beyond Earth to explore space, investigated how sound travels through vibrations, experimented with magnets and electromagnets, and explored light through reflections, colours, and lenses. These practical activities helped students develop curiosity, confidence, and scientific thinking, while encouraging teamwork, communication, and problem-solving. It has been wonderful to see their enthusiasm, focus, and pride in their learning as they explored science in such a meaningful and engaging way.

Maths in KS3



This term in Maths, students have been developing their confidence and problem-solving skills through a range of engaging activities. They explored fractions using real-life examples, investigated ratio and proportion through everyday scenarios and worked with negative numbers and indices to solve problems step by step. Pupils also explored geometry by creating and identifying symmetrical patterns and learned about angles. Throughout the term, students were encouraged to explain their thinking, work collaboratively, and apply their maths skills to real-world situations. It has been fantastic to see their growing confidence, resilience, and pride in their achievements.

Assembly from The South Pole

The pupils were thrilled to welcome Robert Swan OBE, a legendary explorer and environmental leader, who joined them on a big screen live from the coldest and most remote continent on Earth.

Robert holds the distinction of being the first person in history to walk to both the North and South Poles and he shared stories about his decades of exploration and his lifelong mission to protect Antarctica through his 2041 Foundation. The Foundation works to preserve the continent as a natural reserve for peace and science.

The children heard Robert speak passionately about climate change, renewable energy and why Antarctica's future matters to everyone.

“Robert encouraged the young people attending the assembly to see themselves as part of the solution. They particularly enjoyed seeing Robert's beloved companion, a 42-year-old teddy bear which has joined him on many of his expeditions. He reminded everyone that even the most extraordinary journeys have humble beginnings.

“This event wasn't just for Mapesbury School, as other schools around the UK also tuned in. It really was a great opportunity for learning and inspiration. Our students left the assembly not only amazed by Robert's achievements but also motivated to take action for a sustainable future.”





Our School Christmas Fair

On December 11th, Mapesbury was filled with festive cheer as students and staff came together to celebrate Christmas Jumper Day and the Christmas Fair. The school hall was beautifully decorated with great gusto by both students and staff, creating a vibrant and festive atmosphere. The event featured exciting games that added to the fun and engagement.

The fair featured exciting stalls, including face painting, glitter tattoos, cookie decoration, Christmas card making and even a fun Christmas science experiment! Laughter and music filled the air as everyone danced and enjoyed the celebrations.

Students were treated to delightful goodies and gifts, making the day even more special. The spirit of Christmas truly spread throughout Mapesbury, leaving everyone with wonderful memories of this magical event. A special thanks goes to Maria Locorriere for organising the event, with support from other staff members.





Important dates for 2026

Coffee morning – 14th January

Coffee morning – 26th February

End of term assembly – 27th March

Coffee morning – 7th May

Coffee morning – 23rd June

Parents evening – 24th June

End of year assembly – 17th July

Spring Term

Term starts for pupils

Monday 5th January 2026

Half term holiday (School closed for pupils)

Monday 16th February – Friday 20th February 2026

INSET day for staff (school closed for pupils)

Monday 23rd February

Last day of term

Friday 27th March 2026 (1pm finish for pupils)

Bank Holidays

Friday 3rd April and Monday 6th April 2026

Summer Term

INSET day for staff (school closed for pupils)

Monday 13th April 2026

Term starts for pupils

Tuesday 14th April 2026

Bank holiday (school closed)

Monday 4th May and Monday 25th May 2026

Half term holiday (school closed)

Monday 25th May – Friday 29th May 2026

Last day of term

Friday 17th July (1pm finish for pupils)

INSET days for staff (school closed for pupils)

Monday 20th July 2026