

Half Termly Newsletter March 2026

Great Kingshill CE Combined School



Aspiring to be our best with kindness, respect and faith.

"Love your neighbour as yourself" Luke 10:25

Happy Easter!

Even though it's been a short half term, we've packed in plenty of learning and excitement, and the staff and children are all ready for a well-earned break.

The major event of the past few weeks was of course Year 6's residential trip to Norfolk Lakes. The weather was (fortunately) on their side, and they had an amazing time taking part in many fantastic activities - climbing, caving, kayaking, fencing and archery to name but a few. The staff at the centre were full of praise for our children, and their politeness and enthusiasm were a credit to our school.



In school, we have been treated to some fantastic assemblies. Year 1 led the way with fantastic acting and joyous singing with their re-telling of the Easter story.



Some of our Year 5 and 6 children and their parents taught us about the importance of Ramadan and about the Eid celebrations that follow. They did a wonderful job sharing their faith with the school and we all learnt a great deal.



And we had an exciting visit from Nina Sparks, Great Britain's first paralympic snowboarder!



In the classrooms, Reception and Year 4 both took part in Virtual Reality workshops all about minibeasts.

Year 2 continued their historical learning about the Great Fire of London. They even held their own 'Great Fire of London Museum', inviting Year 1 along to have a look at their

wonderful exhibits; hopefully they'll remember some of the facts to impress their Year 2 teachers this time next year!



Year 3 held a day-long science extravaganza this past week, looking at light and shadows, and how they can be affected. Mr Hoddell and I thought they were all having a nap when we popped in: the blinds were all down and the lights were switched off!



On the sports field, there has been success for GKCS F.C. The Year 5 boys are through to the semi-finals of the cup (which takes place on Monday 13th April), and the Year 6 girls took part in a tournament at Piper's Corner - winning one of their games 5-0!



Thank you, as always, for your continued support this past term. Whatever you get up to over the Easter holidays, please stay safe, enjoy some quality time with your family and friends, and of course, eat as much chocolate as possible! We look forward to welcoming you back on Monday 13th April - but please remember that Preschool is not open on that day due to mandatory staff first aid training.

With my best wishes,

Mrs Garner

Forest School news

The winter was freezing and wet, and to be honest, some of the children were not the happiest about being outside. We persevered with Viking games in Year 5, Bridge building in Year 4 and Mallet making in Year 6. I am really impressed with their skills in all of these activities, showing good teamwork and communication.



Years 1, 2, 3 and Reception made it out in the mornings, and have had fun building dens, hunting for bugs, tying some knots and making bird feeders. The birds have swamped the feeders, and have loved the mixture of fats, bird seed and muesli!

As the weather has brightened through the spring term, we have had our crop of snowdrops blooming and are now seeing wild garlic, daffodils and foxgloves spring up all around the edges. We think the bluebells are starting to shoot, and should soon see the gorgeous colours. I have shown the children the difference between the Garlic and Lords and Ladies which is so important as they are often found growing together. One is not good for vampires, the other is not very good for us mammals! So please, no picking or eating unless you have been told to by a responsible and knowledgeable adult. Or me!





The pond is teeming with life, seeing all manner of bugs and larvae, but also some Great Diving Beetles, Water Boatmen and Pond Skaters. We also have an armada (that is the correct collective noun, I checked!) of Great Crested Newts again. Males with the ridged tails, females with the smoother tails, and orange underbellies for them all. They are amazing to watch and some of the children have been brave enough to hold them and put them back safely – washing their hands after, of course. These are a protected species, so it is incredible to know that they are thriving in our pond area. Well done us!



On the fire, we had S'mores in the Autumn term, and Popcorn in the Winter/Spring. We decided to change the way we cooked the popcorn because it was taking too long. We used to just have a pole with a couple of sieves attached to the end, which was great for seeing the popcorn explode, but not great on time. So now, we use a pot on the fire with a bit of oil,

and a special technique for coating the kernels. So far, it has worked perfectly, and most of the children prefer the taste, plus, we have not been pushed or rushed for time. I still like to let them see the pole/sieve method in the younger years, so I will be continuing with that as well.



Here is the timetable for the first half of the summer term:

Summer 1 st Half		
Monday		Reception <small>(Alternate weeks per class)</small>
Tuesday	3T	5W
Wednesday	1B	4P
Thursday	2S	6C
Friday	Pre School (Mr Nixon)	

If you would like to volunteer to help out in the summer, we would be really appreciative. The more eyes and ears we have out there, the more we can do. Get in contact with Mrs Marks if you are interested, and the safeguarding training can take place.

It is likely to be hot at times in the summer, but I still require the children to have long sleeves and long trousers. It helps to protect against stings and scrapes as well as bites and the sun. Hats and water bottles should also be available for them.

Remember, always assume that Forest School is happening unless we specifically tell you. Even on dress up days!

Have a lovely Easter break.

Mr Smith

[Online Safety](#)

Keeping Children Safe Online

The government is currently running a national consultation on how to make the online world safer for children, exploring ideas such as a minimum age for social media, limits on addictive features, and better support for families. Families can learn more about staying safe online through official advice at:

<https://kidsonlinesafety.campaign.gov.uk/>

Parents, carers and children (aged 10 or over) are encouraged to share their views through the official consultation page:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/growing-up-in-the-online-world-a-national-consultation>

GKCS Science Fair 2026

We are delighted to announce the return of our GKCS Annual Science Fair, which will take place on Monday 13th April 2026. This year's theme is "Curiosity: What's Your Question?", celebrating the spirit of inquiry and the joy of discovering how the world works.

Children from Years 1 to 6 are invited to enter, either individually or in groups of up to three. Each exhibit should include:

- A backing board explaining their question, experiment, or investigation.
- Any helpful models, demonstrations, or interactive elements.

Please ensure all exhibits are brought into school on the morning of the fair.

Throughout the school day, every child will have the opportunity to visit the fair, explore the exhibits, and talk to the young scientists presenting their work. Those who have entered will be given time to explain their question and findings to others.

This year's theme encourages children to take the lead in their learning by asking the questions that matter most to them. Curiosity is at the heart of STEM—driving innovation, discovery, and creativity. Their question can be linked to traditional science, or to *any* area of interest such as music, sport, art, their favourite toy, or the world around them.

To inspire ideas, children might ask things like:

- Do pets behave differently at different times of day?

- What questions do we have about our local environment?
- How do bees help flowers grow?
- What is an ecosystem?
- How can we tell how old a shark is?
- How do birds build their nests?
- Does the way food looks affect how it tastes?
- What sort of vehicle would be best on the moon?
- How do boats float?
- What's the best design for a paper aeroplane?
- How can we recycle and reuse paper?
- What's the best way to protect important objects?
- What makes the best hankie when you have a cold?

We cannot wait to see the amazing ideas and investigations the children create—this event has always been a highlight of our school year.

Good luck, and most importantly, have fun exploring your scientific curiosity!

Warm regards,

Mrs Karen Mahdavi

Science Lead

PTA News

DISCO UPDATE

We're excited to share that the Winter PTA Disco will be moving to the spring, giving us the perfect opportunity to create an even more fantastic event! With longer days, brighter vibes and plenty of time to add some extra sparkle, the spring disco promises to be bursting with fun. Thank you for your continued support and enthusiasm – we can't wait to celebrate together and we will be announcing the new date very soon.

GK FUNFEST - SUMMER EVENT

We're starting to plan for GK Funfest and would love support from local businesses! If you or someone you know can offer sponsorship, donate a raffle prize, or would like a stall on the day, we'd be thrilled to hear from you.

Please contact pta@gkcs.school if you're interested – thank you for helping make our event a great one!

2026 CALENDAR

Parents Night	30 th Jan
Religious Celebrations	March/April
Spring Disco	TBC
GK FunFest	TBC June
Summer Disco	9 th July

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

If you would like to get involved in helping at our upcoming events, please get in touch – your support makes all the difference. Please email pta@gkcs.school or contact your class rep to volunteer or find out more.

Attendance

Attendance Really Does Matter!

If your child is absent from school, please email attendance@gkcs.school; please do not email the school office.

Tips for Improving Punctuality

- **Prepare the night before:** Lay out clothes, pack bags, and check homework to avoid last-minute stress.
- **Set a consistent bedtime:** A good night's sleep helps mornings run smoothly.
- **Use alarms and reminders:** Set alarms for both waking up and leaving the house.
- **Plan for extra time:** Aim to leave 10 minutes earlier than needed to allow for unexpected delays.
- **Create a calm morning routine:** Avoid screens before school and keep breakfast simple.
- **Talk about why punctuality matters:** Explain how being on time helps learning and avoids missed opportunities.
- **Use Breakfast Club if mornings are tight:** Our Breakfast Club is open from **7:30am every day**, providing a safe and calm start to the day.

Exceptional Request for Leave of Absence

Leave of Absence Reminder

We would like to remind all parents and carers that **requests for leave of absence should only be made in exceptional circumstances**. Unfortunately, we are **unable to authorise family holidays or extended visits abroad** during term time.

Please be aware of the following important points regarding unauthorised absences:

- **Unauthorised absences are reviewed on a “10 in 10” basis**—this means that if a child accrues **10 unauthorised absences within a 10-week period**, the school is **required** to refer the case to the Local Authority.
- This review process runs **concurrently throughout the school year**; it is not reset at the start of each academic year.
- While the school makes the referral, **the decision to issue a penalty notice lies with the Local Authority’s Attendance Team**.
- If you have previously received a penalty notice, please note that **you will not be eligible for the reduced rate payment option**.

We understand that family circumstances can be complex, and we are here to support you. If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact Mrs Marks on attendance@gkcs.school

Thank you for your continued cooperation in helping us maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Parking

Please see the attached letter below from our local Police Community Support Officer.



Dear Parents and Guardians,

Over recent weeks, the Princes Risborough Neighbourhood Team have received multiple reports from residents and have observed for ourselves a number of issues around drop-off and collection times, including:

- Vehicles stopping on yellow zig-zag lines and in clearly marked “no parking” areas.
- Parents pulling up on pavements, obstructing pedestrians and visibility.
- Cars blocking driveways and junctions, creating hazards for both motorists and children.
- Instances of congestion that significantly slow traffic flow and increase risk to pupils crossing the road.

We appreciate that drop-off and collection times are very busy, and many parents are trying to manage tight schedules. However, the safety of pupils, parents, and staff must remain the priority. We would be grateful if parents and guardians could be mindful of their parking during these times.

The main aim is to maintain a safe environment for your school community, reducing any risks or harm to students, parents, residents and road users. **If these issues persist, fixed penalty notices will be issued to those causing an obstruction to other road users and pedestrians.**

Thank you for your attention to this matter. The Neighbourhood team will continue to monitor the situation during these times. Please feel free to contact the team if you would like to discuss this further.

Kind regards,

Alex Cabbage (C9588)

Police Community Support Officer

Princes Risborough Neighbourhood Team