‘At Moat Farm Infant School every day we learn, achieve, have fun and play’

OCTOBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

What an amazing first half term we have had for the start of this school year! Our attendance for the first half term has been tremendous. We are on over 97% for the first half term, which puts us in the top 5 of Sandwell schools. Thank you to all our wonderful families for ensuring your children are attending school regularly so they can learn and achieve. A big thank you to all the staff for providing such a safe, welcoming, engaging learning environment for our children to thrive in. We hope you have had a wonderful and safe break from school for the October half term holiday and we look forward to seeing everyone again on **Tuesday 3rd November**.

Our School Development Priorities for this year are:

1. Voice 21 Oracy programme

Embed our whole-school approach to oracy teaching and learning; exploring how to adapt classroom practice to different ages, contexts and subjects.

2. Supporting children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Developing our inclusion strategy so that staff refine and strengthen their expertise in inclusive teaching.

3. Review and implement our behaviour policy

Enable all children to confidently demonstrate positive learning behaviours in school and develop their social skills, with the simplification of our school rules to 'Ready, Respectful, Safe'.

4. Refine and enhance the quality of teaching and learning in EYFS

Ensure our EYFS provision, curriculum and high-quality teaching and learning is consistent across Nursery and Reception in order to raise the Good Level of Development by the end of Reception.

5. Strengthen what high quality teaching looks like across school

Every child in every class is supported to learn, remember, practise and apply important knowledge and skills. Staff have a shared understanding of what effective teaching looks like in each year group across all subjects.

6. Secure excellent attendance levels for every child at MFI

Build on previous year's improvements for attendance to enable every child to attend school regularly so they benefit from a high-quality education.

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Settling into Nursery – Miss Bourne

In Nursery we began in September by visiting our new children at home. This was a great experience for children and staff to meet and get to know each other. We then enjoyed hosting stay and play sessions for our new children and parents and we also welcomed back our returning children.

This half term we have focused on ensuring our children are settled into Nursery, learning their new routines and making friends. We have also enjoyed our small maths sessions, rhyme time and our early phonics listening activities. The children have settled so well and are building great friendships. We are so proud of them all!

Settling into Reception – Miss Evans

Our Reception children have made a wonderful start to their new classes, beginning to build friendships, getting to know their teachers and becoming familiar with their new learning environments. We are so proud of how they have settled in and are beginning to develop their confidence, independence and sense of belonging within the Reception setting.

Our transition sessions played an important role in supporting the children to feel safe, secure and comfortable in their new surroundings. For some children who had not previously attended a nursery on our school site, we offered a home visit to help them become familiar with their teachers before starting Reception. We would like to thank all our parents and carers for engaging so positively with these opportunities and for supporting us in making this transition as smooth and reassuring as possible for the children.

The *Stay and Play* sessions held before the summer holidays, as well as those offered when the children returned in September, provided valuable opportunities for the children to explore their classrooms, discover the resources available to them and begin to feel at home in their new surroundings. Having a familiar adult alongside them offered reassurance and helped them build the confidence to explore, play and interact with their new teachers and peers at their own pace.

These early experiences have helped lay strong foundations for a positive start to school life. As the children continue to settle, we look forward to seeing their friendships flourish, their confidence grow and their enthusiasm for learning develop throughout the year.

OPAL play – Miss Taylor

The children have really been enjoying our relaunch of OPAL this term. We have gradually been opening many new areas for them to enjoy. These have included small world play, dancing and music, dolls, water play, a gladiators area and scooter boards. We have also recently opened the ramp area which includes a sledge slide, a chalk wall and a digging area. The children receive weekly OPAL assemblies which allow us to make agreements on how each area should be used and to discuss how the children can help to maintain each area. We will continue to open new areas throughout the year with the aim of making play and lunchtimes as exciting and engaging for children as possible.

We will be launching an OPAL bingo competition in Autumn 2, so please look out for this. Your help is crucial for us in being able to continue to develop our OPAL provision. Please also ensure that your child has wellies in school, this will allow them to access the full provision at all times.

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Year 1 Transition – Mrs Somers

Our Year 1 children have made a fantastic start to the new school year and have settled into their new routines brilliantly. They are growing in confidence and independence as they adapt to the expectations of Year 1.

The children have particularly enjoyed taking part in OPAL sessions in the afternoons, as well as making the most of OPAL at playtimes and lunchtimes. These opportunities allow them to explore, play creatively, develop their imaginations and build friendships.

In the classroom, the children have been working hard in their learning, particularly in phonics and reading, as they continue to develop the skills needed to become confident, fluent readers. They are also learning to follow our school rules of being Ready, Respectful and Safe, helping to create a positive environment where everyone can learn and thrive.

We are so proud of how well the children have adapted to Year 1 and look forward to seeing them continue to grow, develop their independence and embrace new learning opportunities over the coming months!

Year 2 transition – Mrs Spencer

The year 2 children have settled into their new classes well and have made a very positive start to the school year. The two new classes still look brand new! The children are becoming increasingly familiar with their new routines, classroom expectations and learning environments. It has been lovely to see their confidence grow as they build relationships with their new teachers, develop confidence and engage enthusiastically in their learning.

Most of the children took part in the school trip where they were lucky enough to visit not 1, not 2 but 3 different locations!! They represented our school really well in the community. Lots of children also made a boat as part of a science homework project whereby they tested the suitability of materials as part of the science curriculum. What a good start year 2! We look forward to seeing the children continue to thrive.

Rainbow & Sunshine class – Mrs Whitehouse

Sunshine and Rainbow Class have settled in wonderfully and transitioned smoothly into their new school routines and expectations. The children are becoming increasingly familiar with their environment, daily activities and learning. It has been so lovely to see them growing in confidence, building positive relationships and engaging happily in their learning.

Everyone is making a great start to the school year, and we are all so pleased with how well the children have adapted. We look forward to continuing this positive journey together!

Reception phonics and communication ‘Stay and Learn’ session – Miss Evans

A huge thank you to all the parents and carers who joined us for our Reception Phonics and Communication Stay and Learn session! It was lovely to see so many families taking part, sharing ideas and exploring ways to support their children’s early communication, language and reading development at home.

During the session, children had the opportunity to engage in conversations with their peers and the adults supporting the session, practising their own **oracy skills — speaking and listening**. These activities highlighted how important it is for children to have regular opportunities to talk, listen, share their ideas and express themselves confidently. Every conversation, whether it is chatting about the day, sharing a story, singing a song or talking during play, helps children develop the communication skills they need to become confident learners and readers.

We explored the importance of **back-and-forth conversations** between children and their adults at home. These interactions are often described as *serve and return*: a child makes a sound, asks a question, points to something or shares an idea, and their adult responds by acknowledging, answering or extending the interaction. When adults respond warmly and give children time to reply, they help build vocabulary, strengthen understanding and develop listening and speaking skills. These little everyday moments make a big difference! We encourage families to follow their child’s interests, ask open-ended questions, listen carefully and allow plenty of time for children to respond.

For further ideas and practical advice on supporting your child’s communication and language development, Sandwell’s Talking Tips offer helpful guidance for families:

Sandwell Talking Tips – Supporting your child’s communication and language

We also introduced families to **Little Wandle Letters and Sounds**, the phonics scheme we follow in school to teach and assess children’s early reading skills. During their Reception phonics lessons, the children are learning their Phase 2 graphemes (the letters or letter groups that represent sounds), developing their ability to orally blend sounds together to read words, and beginning to read simple consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words, such as *sat*, *pin* and *dog*. The children are also learning to recognise and read tricky words, which cannot always be read by applying the phonics knowledge they have learned so far.

Working together between home and school is a wonderful way to build children’s confidence and enthusiasm for reading. Little Wandle provides helpful resources and videos for parents and carers, including guidance on the sounds and words children are learning and how to support phonics practice at home.

Little Wandle – Resources for Parents

Thank you again to everyone who attended and contributed so enthusiastically to the workshop. We really value the strong partnership between home and school and look forward to continuing to work together to nurture our Reception children’s communication, confidence and love of reading. Every conversation, every new sound and every story shared helps lay the foundations for a successful reading journey!

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School Nursery Places

Applications are now being taken for next year's nursery places – January 2027, April 2027 and September 2027 intakes. Registration forms are available at the school office or it can be emailed to you on request. Don't leave it too late to apply for your place.

If you would like to know more ask at the office for Miss Bourne (Nursery teacher & EYFS lead) alternatively you can email her direct on: Beth.Bourne@mfi.school

This is the range of options for our families:

- **30 hour** funded places for **3 and 4-year** olds (8:40 – 3:00) you can apply for the eligibility code on this website. www.childcarechoices.gov.uk
- **15 hour** funded places for **3 and 4-year** olds - children may start with us the term after they turn 3 (8:30 – 11:30am or 12-3pm)
- **15 hour** funded places for eligible 2-year olds (12-3pm) some families may receive the 'Golden ticket' code or letter offering them free nursery places for their child.
- **15 hour** funded places for eligible working families with 2-year olds (12 – 3pm everyday) You can apply for the eligibility code on this website – free childcare for 2-year olds www.childcarechoices.gov.uk
- We have the option for families to pay for additional nursery hours, individual sessions will cost £25 for 3 hours.

Childcare Choices
Supporting families with childcare costs

www.childcarechoices.gov.uk

Sandwell Family Information Service

Family Information Service Hub (sandwell.gov.uk)

School Coffee Morning – Mrs Ashmore

We held our school coffee morning on Thursday 8th October. A big thank you to all the parents and carers who attended. It was lovely to see you all there!

We were joined by a range of professionals and services, including Speech and Language Therapy, the School Nurse, Ideal for All and Barnardo's, as well as our school Designated Safeguarding Lead, Mrs George and school SENCo, Mrs Ashmore.

It was a lovely opportunity for parents to chat, ask questions and find out more about the support available.

And of course, the cake was delicious too!

Our next coffee morning will take place on **Thursday 4th February** at 8.30am. We hope to see you there.

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Year 1 Phonics Workshops – Mrs Somers

It was lovely to welcome parents into school for our Year 1 Phonics and Reading Workshops! Parents had the opportunity to see how we teach phonics and how it helps children become confident, fluent readers.

During the workshop, parents took part in a reading practice session with their children and explored the strategies we use in school. This helped them understand how our reading practice sessions work and provided useful ideas for supporting reading at home.

Thank you to everyone who joined us and for your continued support in helping your child develop a love of reading.

If you were unable to attend, you can find helpful videos and resources on our school website and a copy of the powerpoint was sent out on 'School Life'.

Teacher training days

These are the training days for this school year. Please make a note of them in your diary or calendar, as school will be closed to all children on these days.

~~Tuesday 1st September~~

~~Wednesday 2nd September~~

Monday 2nd November – this is just after the October half term holidays

Friday 4th December

Monday 17th May

Monday 7th June

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Friendly Reminders for Our Moat Farm Families

Parking:
Please remember to park thoughtfully and safely when dropping off and collecting your children. The safety of our children is our top priority, and your cooperation really helps us keep everyone safe. Also, avoid blocking driveways so that we can be considerate to neighbours who live near our school. Thank you for helping us look after our community!

Named Clothing:
To help us keep track of your child's belongings, please make sure all clothing is **clearly named**. It makes it so much easier to return lost items when clothing is named so we know who it belongs to. Thank you for helping us keep uniforms and belongings safe and in the right hands.

Reporting Absence:
If your child is unwell or unable to attend school, please call the school office before 9am on each day of absence. You can leave a message on the answer phone or speak directly to our friendly office staff. When you call, please let us know your child's name, class, the reason for their absence, and when you expect them to return. This helps us keep everyone safe and well informed.

Keeping in Touch:
We love keeping you in the loop with everything happening at school! To make sure you never miss an update, please take a quick peek at our school website. You'll find copies of all our latest letters and a handy calendar packed with all the exciting dates we have coming up. Moat Farm Infant School - Home

Helpful Reminders:
Want to double-check a date or re-read a note home? Our website has you covered! Head over to see our latest parent letters and our live school calendar so you can keep track of all the fun things planned for the children.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership!

Dates for your diary - **November**

Training Day on Monday 2nd November School reopens on Tuesday 3rd November

11th – Frog & Kingfisher reading workshop 2.15pm

12th – Otter & Rabbit reading workshop 2.15pm

13th – Children in Need Day – wear spots

16th Odd Sock Day for Anti-bullying week

Phonics at Moat Farm Infant school – Mrs Spencer

We teach phonics through *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised*, which is a systematic and synthetic phonics programme. We start teaching phonics in Nursery and follow the *Little Wandle Letters and Sounds Revised* progression.

We teach phonics daily in Reception and KS1. In Reception, we build from 10-minute lessons with additional daily oral blending games, to the full-length lesson as quickly as possible -up to 20 minutes. Any child who needs additional practise has daily keep-up support, taught by a fully trained adult. Keep-up lessons match the structure of class teaching, and use the same procedures, resources and mantras, but in smaller steps with more repetition, so that every child secures their learning.

Each lesson comprises of:

- a review of previously learned phonemes and graphemes
- oral blending, teacher-led blending, independent blending
- teaching of a new phoneme
- practise sounding out and blending words
- segmenting words to spell
- reading/writing a phrase or sentence

Reading

From Reception through to year 2, we teach children to read through reading practice sessions three times a week. These are taught by fully trained staff to small groups of approximately six children using books matched to the children’s secure phonic knowledge.

Each reading practice session has a clear focus, so that the demands of the session do not overload the children’s working memory. The reading practice sessions have been designed to focus on three key reading skills:

- decoding
- prosody: teaching children to read with understanding and expression
- comprehension: teaching children to understand the text.

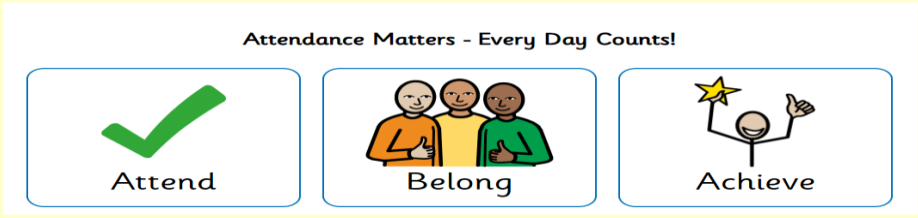
Once children have mastered the phonic code their reading becomes automatic and fluent. At this point in year 2, children switch to fluency books. They continue to read in small groups three times a week to an adult.

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Year 2 trip – Mrs Bhandal

Our Year 2 children had a wonderful time exploring our local community on an exciting educational trip. They visited a gurdwara, church and library, where they had the opportunity to learn more about different places, traditions and services within our local area. The children listened carefully, asked thoughtful questions and enjoyed discovering how each place supports and brings people together in our community. It was a fantastic day of learning, curiosity and new experiences!





Attendance updates for half term 1

This is the overall class attendance for the first half term. What a fabulous start we had to the school year. Almost all classes above 96% attendance across school.
All children with Band 1 (95-100%) will receive a certificate to celebrate their great attendance in half term 1.

Reception
Robin 97.9%
Mole 96.1%
Owl 96%
Fox 94.1%

Year 1
Hedgehog 98.2%
Heron 98%
Squirrel 97.4%
Badger 97.3%

Year 2
Otter 98.5%
Kingfisher 97.6%
Frog 96.6%
Rabbit 96.1%

Nursery
AM 87.5%
PM 88.3%
All day 93.4%

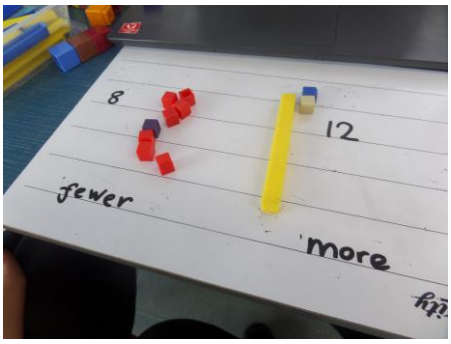
SEND Hubs
Rainbow 93%
Sunshine 90.4%

Maths – Mrs Hopkins

At Moat Farm Infant School, we believe that **everyone can do maths**. Through our ‘Teaching for Mastery’ approach and the NCETM ‘Mastering Number’ programme, children learn mathematics through whole-class teaching, practical resources, mathematical discussion and real-life contexts.

Learning is carefully broken down into small steps, allowing children to build deep understanding, confidence and fluency before moving on. We encourage children to explain their reasoning using mathematical language, learn from mistakes and develop a positive growth mindset.

By making connections between different areas of maths and the world around them, we aim to nurture enthusiastic, resilient mathematicians who enjoy problem solving and leave us with the knowledge and confidence they need for future success.








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4.00--5.00
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Wednesday
5.30-7.30

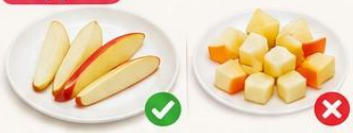
Early Years Food Choking Hazards

Prepare food safely for children under 5

Small changes make a big difference. Follow these simple tips to help prevent choking and keep children safe while eating.

Fruit and Vegetables – Prepare appropriately

Apple



- Slice into thin wedges (or grate/mash for younger children).
- Do not give large chunks or hard pieces.

Tomato



- Cut small tomatoes into quarters (or smaller).
- Do not give whole cherry tomatoes or large pieces.

Pear



- Slice into thin wedges (or grate/mash for younger children).
- Do not give large chunks or hard pieces.

Carrot



- Keep carrot whole (for older children) or cut into narrow batons (for younger children).
- Do not give large chunks or round slices.

Grapes



- Cut grapes in half (lengthways, then halved).
- Do not give whole grapes (choking risk).

Strawberries



- Cut into small pieces (or quarters).
- Do not give whole strawberries (especially to younger children).

Sausages



- Cut into short strips. Halve and then lengthways (or as thinly as possible). Peeling the skin helps.
- Do not give whole sausages or large chunks.

Other important food preparation tips

- Remove bones, stones and pips.
- Soften hard fruit and vegetables (e.g. by steaming or simmering).
- Cut food into safe shapes and sizes.
- Remove skin, fat and gristle from meat and fish.
- Grate or cut cheese into short strips.
- Chop or flake nuts and seeds (do not give whole nuts to children under 5).

Foods to avoid for under 5s



- Popcorn
- Chewing gum & marshmallows
- Peanut butter (on its own)
- Raw jelly cubes
- Boiled sweets and ice cubes
- Whole raisins and dried fruit (under 1 year)

Prepare food safely · Supervise while eating · Keep children safe · Good food, healthy children

Small pieces. Safe choices. Happy, healthy children.

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Opening times:
Wednesdays: 10:00AM – 1:00PM



Choice ● Dignity ● Hope