

# Ashill

## Primary School



Friday 8th December 2023

### A message from Mrs Joanne Crocker

This term has been incredibly busy and there is so much to celebrate.

We have worked together as a school, as part of the Redstart Learning Partnership - with pupils, staff, families, and the Teaching and Learning Committee being incredibly supportive, which has got us through some challenges this half term.



In some ways it is the end of an era as we move forwards as part of the ACE Academy for Character and Excellence, but we take with us a strong network of friendship, collaboration and a sense of excitement for the new growth ahead

I have been greatly impressed by the pupils' hard work and determination this term. As a result, their books show increased knowledge, understanding and high expectations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, our parents, carers and families for your continued support and encouragement this term.

Being mindful of the less than ideal circumstances some families around the world find themselves in, this poem resonated with me.

The poem is by Donna Ashworth – Joy Chose you:

Joy does not arrive with a fanfare,  
on a red carpet strewn with the flowers of a perfect life.  
Joy sneaks in, as you pour a cup of coffee,  
watching the sun hit your favourite tree, just right.  
And you usher joy away,  
because you are not ready for it.  
Your house is not as it must be,  
for such a distinguished guest.  
But joy cares nothing for your messy home,  
or your bank-balance,  
or your waistline, you see.  
Joy is supposed to slither through the cracks of your imperfect life,  
that's how joy works.  
You cannot invite her, you can only be ready when she appears.  
And hug her with meaning,  
because in this very moment,  
joy chose you.

As we prepare for the festive season, do take the time to find those moments

Finally, we would like to wish all of you celebrating Christmas a very 'Merry Christmas' and to wish all our families a peaceful, happy and healthy time over the festive period.

### The Photo of the Week



### Christmas Lunch 2023



This school is part of the The Redstart Learning Partnership, a Multi Academy Trust of primary schools in Somerset.

### Dates for your Diary

- 11th Dec—NO CLUBS
- 12th Dec—Nativity Ashill Church 6pm
- 13th Dec —Pantomime Trip
- 15th Dec—Last day of Term
- 2nd January—Inset Day
- 3rd January—Back to School
- 10th January—Reception vision screening

Ashill Primary School, Ashill, Ilminster,  
Somerset, TA9 9ND

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## Attendance Breakdown: (for this month)

KS1/ Hedgehog Class - 94.38%

KS2 / Squirrels Class - 92.26%

**Whole School - 93.55%**

## Safeguarding

Safeguarding is high priority at Ashill Primary School. We take every opportunity to ensure that our pupil's safety is paramount. We want our pupils to be healthy and happy and to develop well, both physically and mentally. The school follows the latest Government Guidance to ensure we are fulfilling our duties in this important area.

Our Designated Lead (DSL) is Mrs Joanne Crocker and our Deputy Safeguarding Lead (DDSL) is Pamela Mount (School and Pre-School).

Our school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy can be found online at: [www.ashillprimaryschool.co.uk/1213/safeguarding](http://www.ashillprimaryschool.co.uk/1213/safeguarding)

If you have any concerns about the safety of a child you can either talk to our DSL or DDSL as above, or you may phone Somerset Direct on 0300 123 2224.

There is a lot of online safety advice on our website – please follow [this link](#) to help keep your child safe.

## Parent & Carer Contact Information

If you change any of your contact details, ***including your place of work or moving house***, please inform the school office as soon as possible so that we may update our records. It is important that we have up to date details at all times. Please email [ashill@redstartpartnership.co.uk](mailto:ashill@redstartpartnership.co.uk) or telephone the school office on 01823 480637 any morning between 9.00am and 12 noon.

## School Day Timings

Please note: our school gate opens each morning from 8.45am, our school day begins at 8.55 am and finishes at 3.15pm. If your child/ren arrives after 8.55am please do let us know the reason (we know traffic is unavoidable and sometimes cars don't start) so we can avoid marking them in as late on the register. Ashill pre-school opens at 9.00am and closes at 3.00pm

## Pupil Medical/Health Updates

It is important that any medical updates for your child are communicated through to the office, either by email or letter. This information is entered into their pupil record. ***We would also like to know about any regular medication your child takes***. The school office is open everyday from 9.00am to 12noon. If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to get in touch.

## Water Bottles

It is important that all pupils bring a bottle of water into school every day.

## Cold Weather Gear

Please send your child/ren into school with appropriate clothing every day now we are in the Winter season. A warm coat and hat are recommended.

## No Nuts

Just a reminder that we are a nut-free zone at Ashill and this is most important to consider when putting together lunch boxes especially as some cereal bars, cakes and even pesto contain nuts. Thank you for your help with this.

## News from The Redstart Learning Partnership

I've had such a wonderful last few weeks. It's been such a delight to join you at so many fabulous nativity plays, beautiful concerts, amazing Christmas Fairs and lovely church services across the Trust. Christmas is always my favourite time in school - it is truly magical and creates so many memories for all the children. I am sure, like me, you can recall your Christmas nativity so I know the events now will remain with the children for many years to come. I'd like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and a fantastic 2024.

Suzanne Flack (Mrs), CEO  
The Redstart Learning Partnership

## Forest School

Wow what a term we have had in forest school. The children have embraced their experiences with enthusiasm and joy. We have seen the children develop in confidence, resilience and perseverance, which has been very evident especially in the second half of the term. It has been very wet and cold but this certainly did not dampen their spirits.

The children helped to build a new step going into the cabin, learning new skills and safety procedures regarding tools they used. The children also revisited old skills such as whittling and fire lighting. They listened well to instructions and demonstrated how to use tools and follow fire lighting instructions safely. Each child had a go at using the steel and flint to light some cotton wool. Some of the children found it a bit tricky but with determination and perseverance they were able to generate a spark to light the cotton wool. The children were very proud of themselves and their peers were very supportive, cheering them on and using encouragement.

With the very cold weather, the children welcomed a well earned cup of hot chocolate, which went down well.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Liz (Mrs Sanderson) for volunteering during these sessions. She has been so supportive and the children love that she helps too.

Finally I would like to say how proud we are of all of the children and that they are truly amazing.

Happy Christmas to you all and we look forward to our next sessions.

Pam and Liz.

## Squirrel Class

It feels like this half-term has flown by! Squirrel class has been working hard during the build-up to Christmas. During their Science lessons, they have studied the properties of materials. They enjoyed it, as I have never seen them so engrossed in their work!

In English, we have been looking at the book 'The Man Who Walked Between Two Towers' by the author Mordicai Gerstein. The class is looking at the tightrope walking feat Phillippe Petit completed in 1974. Using Phillippe's story, we have been exploring how to construct interesting and imaginative character descriptions. Year 3 has worked hard on this and is settling well into KS2.

In Guided Reading Years 4, 5, and 6 have been absorbed in Malorie Blackman's novel Cloud Busting, an intriguing story of friendship they have enjoyed working through. The whole class has also thrown themselves wholeheartedly into this term's art lessons, impressing me with their creativity and confidence.

Preparations for the Nativity are moving along nicely and we hope to see as many of you there as possible! We are also looking forward to the pantomime trip next week.

We had fun working on Christmas poems and decoration building with Mistletoe the Elf (a.k.a Mrs Steemson), who came in and worked with us one afternoon.

We are, pupils and staff alike, looking forward to a well-earned break over Christmas, rested and refuelled for next term!

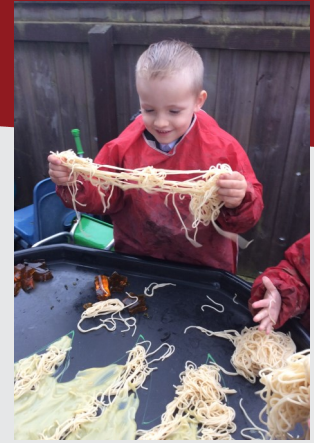
Mr Oliver and Mrs Newman





## Hedgehog Class

Another month has flown by and once again Hedgehogs have worked hard and had some fun! Every Thursday afternoon we have been to space in our P.E. sessions. During this time we have cussed on jumping, changing direction and speed and observational skills. Children have had a real sense of adventure and fully embraced the role-play aspect of this.



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Maths for Year 1 has looked at different ways to partition single digit numbers, such as  $2+4=6$  and  $1+5=6$ . Year 2 have looked at rounding numbers to support mental arithmetic, when adding 9 or 19 for example. Reception children continue to focus on counting and number recognition. All of these are basic skills that children need to support maths challenges.

In English and phonics lessons, Reception children continue to learn individual letter sounds and some children can now write an initial letter sound for words. They are also starting to blend sounds to read. Key Stage 1 has a daily Curious Quest which continues to inspire their writing under the watchful eye of Professor Klunk. They are also watched by Noodle and Titch, who check that every sentence has a capital letter and a full stop.

Over the last few weeks History lessons have explored the lives of Florence Nightingale and Mary Seacole. It has been interesting to consider how conditions used to be in hospitals and the development of our understanding of the importance of simple hygiene practices. It's also been a good reminder to wash our hands after visiting the toilet!

Last week we were fortunate to have a visit from Somerset Sight, which was a great opportunity to learn about the challenges faced by those with partial sight. Children wore glasses designed to distort vision in a variety of ways, which helped to understand the range of visual impairments. Kate also shared some of the aids used, including using Siri to send a text and magnifying glasses. Did you know that pelican crossings have a ball under the box that spins when it is safe to cross the road? Thank you to everyone who contributed to the cost of this visit, It really was worthwhile.

Reception have been enjoying lots of messy play and I am learning to put the aprons out with this. They recently arrived to find a Christmas tree made from spaghetti, custard and jelly, which they were very keen to explore. It didn't look like a tree for long. KS1 children also had the opportunity to play with this. Messy play often divides children into those that could stand there all day playing with it and those who have to build up the courage to dip their finger in. I'm sure you will know which category your child falls into.

Whilst Mrs Evans is still busy being an amazing Mum, we have been very fortunate to have Mrs Newman covering each week and this has really helped to keep the classroom running smoothly and children engaged in their learning. I have had regular contact with Mrs Evans and she is still very much 'in the loop' ready to pick up where she left off as soon as possible.

So with Nativity songs churning in our heads we prepare for the last week of term and look forward to all that it brings. Thank you for all your support this term. Thank you also to our amazing school staff, who work so hard to support your children. Especially Mrs Burgess who cleans up after our messy play!

Merry Christmas everyone.

Mrs Bulgin



## Preschool - Fawns

Well it seems like this term has flown by and it has been a very busy term with the children enjoying making lots of different Christmas crafts. The children have helped to decorate the tree and made decorations for the room, it is beginning to look a lot like Christmas!

Despite the cold weather the children continue to enjoy being outside, especially at break times when they have the opportunity to play with the older children and I have to say the older children enjoy it just as much. The children joined the whole school for lunch on Christmas lunch day and some of them had the hot dinner, which went down well.

We made fresh playdough which the children helped with. They measured and mixed the ingredients, choosing their favourite colour and finally adding some sparkle.

The children have visited Hedgehog classroom a number of times which they found exciting, and joined in with activities that were on offer.

The children have been practising singing a few Christmas songs and will perform these to their families on Thursday 14th December at 2.30pm in the preschool room.

Finally, we would like to wish our families a very merry Christmas and we look forward to seeing you all in 2024.

Pam, Kali and Becca





## Somerset School Terms and Holidays 2023/2024 Academic Year

September 2023					October 2023					November 2023							
M		4	11	18	25	Mo	2	9	16	23	30	M		6	13	20	27
Tu		5	12	19	26	Tu	3	10	17	24	31	Tu		7	14	21	28
W		6	13	20	27	We	4	11	18	25	W	1	8	15	22	29	
Th		7	14	21	28	Th	5	12	19	26	Th	2	9	16	23	30	
F	1	8	15	22	29	Fr	6	13	20	27	F	3	10	17	24		
Sa	2	9	16	23	30	Sa	7	14	21	28	Sa	4	11	18	25		
Su	3	10	17	24	Su	1	8	15	22	29	Su	5	12	19	26		
December 2023					January 2024					February 2024							
M		4	11	18	25	M	1	8	15	22	29	M		5	12	19	26
Tu		5	12	19	26	Tu	2	9	16	23	30	Tu		6	13	20	27
W		6	13	20	27	W	3	10	17	24	31	W		7	14	21	28
Th		7	14	21	28	Th	4	11	18	25	Th	1	8	15	22	29	
F	1	8	15	22	29	F	5	12	19	26	F	2	9	16	23		
Sa	2	9	16	23	30	Sa	6	13	20	27	Sa	3	10	17	24		
Su	3	10	17	24	31	Su	7	14	21	28	Su	4	11	18	25		
March 2024					April 2024					May 2024							
M		4	11	18	25	M	1	8	15	22	29	M		6	13	20	27
Tu		5	12	19	26	Tu	2	9	16	23	30	Tu		7	14	21	28
W		6	13	20	27	W	3	10	17	24	31	W	1	8	15	22	29
Th		7	14	21	28	Th	4	11	18	25	Th	2	9	16	23	30	
F	1	8	15	22	29	F	5	12	19	26	F	3	10	17	24	31	
Sa	2	9	16	23	30	Sa	6	13	20	27	Sa	4	11	18	25		
Su	3	10	17	24	31	Su	7	14	21	28	Su	5	12	19	26		
June 2024					July 2024					August 2024							
M		3	10	17	24	M	1	8	15	22	29	M		5	12	19	26
Tu		4	11	18	25	Tu	2	9	16	23	30	Tu		6	13	20	27
W		5	12	19	26	W	3	10	17	24	31	W		7	14	21	28
Th		6	13	20	27	Th	4	11	18	25	Th	1	8	15	22	29	
F		7	14	21	28	F	5	12	19	26	F	2	9	16	23	30	
Sa	1	8	15	22	29	Sa	6	13	20	27	Sa	3	10	17	24	31	
Su	2	9	16	23	30	Su	7	14	21	28	Su	4	11	18	25		

### Key:

<span style="background-color: #008080; width: 15px; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></span>	School Holiday
<span style="background-color: #ff8c00; width: 15px; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></span>	Bank Holiday
<span style="border: 1px solid black; width: 15px; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></span>	Term Time
<span style="background-color: #90ee90; width: 15px; height: 10px; display: inline-block;"></span>	Inset Days

### Term dates summary:

<b>Term 1:</b> 04 September – 20 October 2023 (35 days)	
<b>Term 2:</b> 30 October – 15 December 2023 (35 days)	
<b>Term 3:</b> 02 January – 9 February 2024 (29 days)	
<b>Term 4:</b> 19 February – 28 March 2024 (29 days)	
<b>Term 5:</b> 15 April – 24 May 2024 (29 days)	
<b>Term 6:</b> 03 June – 24 July 2024 (38 days)	<b>TOTAL = 195</b>

### Bank and public holidays 2023/24

Christmas Day	25 December 2023	Easter Monday	01 April 2024
Boxing Day	26 December 2023	May Day Bank Holiday	06 May 2024
New Year's Day	01 January 2024	Spring Bank Holiday	27 May 2024
Good Friday	29 March 2024	Summer Bank Holiday	26 August 2024