

Queen Victoria

Primary School



NEWSLETTER

23rd October 2026



Key Dates

Half Term: Monday 26th – Friday 30th October

9th Nov–2M Library visit

12th Nov–Reception
Phonics workshop

16th Nov– 2H Library visit

16th Nov – Odd Socks Day
(Anti-Bullying Week)

20th Nov – Children in Need

20th Nov – Year 4 SPARKs
visit

26th Nov–Year 1 Phonics
Workshop Recap

27th Nov – Flu vaccine
catch-up session

2nd Dec – Year 3 children's
Iron Age workshop

3rd Dec–Year 1 Black
Country Museum

4th Dec – INSET Day

10th Dec – Christmas Disco

18th Dec–Last school Day

21st Dec–1st Jan–
Christmas Holidays



This Week's News

It's been another busy week at Queen Victoria, with lots of exciting activities taking place as we reach the end of our first half term!

School Photography – Monday

On Monday, we welcomed a photographer into school to capture some new photographs for our website and promotional materials. We are working to refresh the images on our website to better showcase our wonderful learning environments, school grounds and the exciting opportunities available to our children. We are also taking a slightly different approach to photography, using creative angles and photographs taken from behind or over children's shoulders to help protect their privacy while still capturing school life.

Class 1T Library Visit – Tuesday

On Tuesday, it was Class 1T's turn to visit Sedgley Library. The children enjoyed exploring the library and discovering the wonderful range of books available. Visits like these are a great way to encourage a love of reading and help children become familiar with their local library.

Have a Lovely Half Term!

As we reach the end of our first half term, we would like to thank all our children, families and staff for their hard work and support over the past eight weeks. We hope everyone enjoys a well-deserved break, and we look forward to welcoming the children back to school after the holiday on **Monday 2nd November**.



Let's Celebrate!

Celebrating effort, achievement and success



Positive Notes & Behaviour Recognition

We love letting our families know when their children have been caught doing something great in school! All staff give out **Positive Notes** regularly for children who are going out of their way in role modelling our school CARE values. We also love recognising children who follow our school rules: Ready, Respectful & Safe, and conduct themselves well in school by adding them to class recognition boards. Children who demonstrate exemplary behaviour are awarded a **Behaviour Recognition Note** to bring home to let their grown-ups know they have been golden.

CARE Awards

Each week, teachers award one child in their class who has had a remarkable week in demonstrating our school values or going above and beyond to follow our school

Golden Rules: Ready, Respectful and Safe.

Children are awarded these certificates during our Friday Celebration Assemblies and are invited to have squash and biscuits with a senior leader as a special treat.

A huge well done to this week's super stars!



Care Award Winners This Week

Nursery

Elliot

Year One

Archie

Frankie

Year Three

Bella

Michael

Year Five

Skylar-Rose

Hayley

Reception

Harvey

Jobey

Year Two

Nihal

Isabella

Year Four

Ollie

Raiden

Year Six

Maisie

Theo

Leo



Attendance

Every day counts. Every lesson matters



A Sparkling End to Half Term! 🎉

A huge congratulations and thank you to all our families for your fantastic efforts in encouraging and supporting your children's attendance. We have made such a strong start to the year—let's keep this momentum going and aim for the top of the trust for attendance!

Our October **Strictly Come Attend-dancing** winners are:

- 🌟 **1T with 97.4%**
- 🌟 **6C with 96.8%**

Well done to both classes—enjoy your disco glitter balls! 🎉

Let's see which classes can be our best attenders in November. Every day in school is another opportunity to learn, enjoy friendships and celebrate success.

Have a lovely half-term break. We look forward to seeing everyone back on **Monday 2 November**, ready for another brilliant half term!

Class Attendance

Class	Attendance %
RD	94.5
RP	96.9
1J	96.1
1T	100
2H	93.3
2M	94.6
3B	92.9
3C	90.6
4P	95.4
4S	87.9
5BR	97.6
5S	99.1
6C	98.1
6H	94
6M	97



School Attendance
This Week

95.01%



This Week's News



Kidz Fit – Friday

We finished the half term on an energetic note today, with Kidz Fit visiting school to deliver fun health and fitness workshops for all year groups. The sessions encouraged children to get active while learning about the importance of exercise, healthy lifestyles and looking after their bodies. What a fantastic way to end the half term!



Kidz Fit
For a healthy future



This Week's News

B:M2026

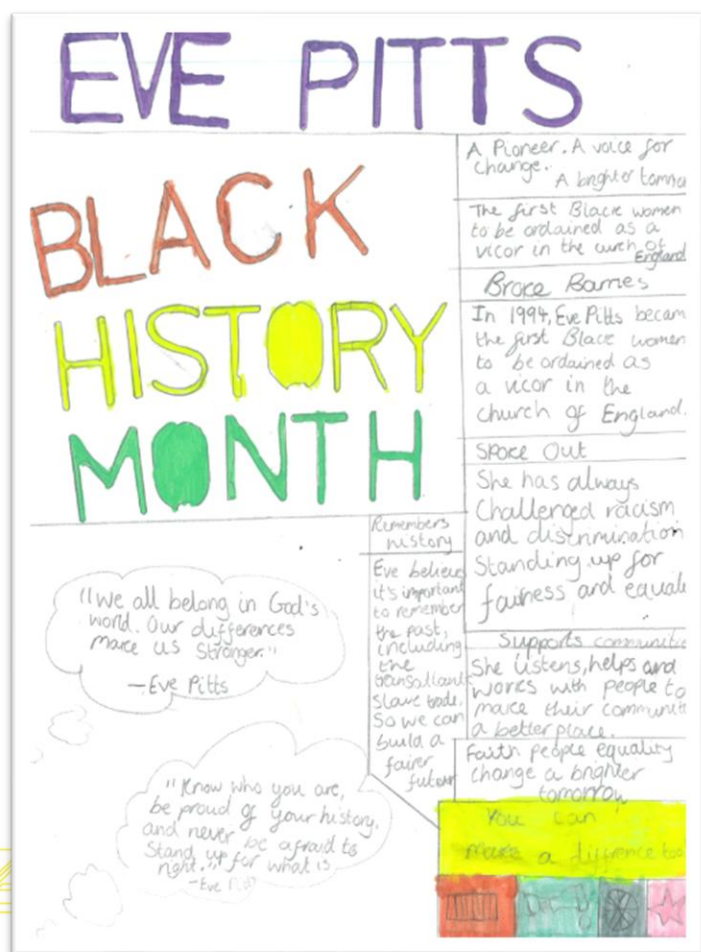
DIG DEEPER, LOOK CLOSER, THINK BIGGER

Black History Month

As part of Black History Month, classes across school have taken part in special history and art lessons celebrating the achievements and contributions of inspirational Black individuals.

Children have learnt about a range of significant figures, including Mary Seacole, Katherine Johnson, Benjamin Zephaniah and sporting stars such as Denise Lewis and Jessica Ennis-Hill. They have also explored the work of Black artists, creating artwork inspired by their different styles and techniques.

These activities have provided valuable opportunities for children to broaden their understanding of history, celebrate diversity and recognise the achievements of people from different backgrounds.



This Week's News



Wear Red Day – Wednesday

On Wednesday, we joined schools across the country in supporting Show Racism the Red Card's Wear Red Day. Thank you to all the children and staff who wore red to show their support for this important message. Our assemblies this week focused on anti-racism, helping children understand the importance of treating everyone with kindness and respect, celebrating our differences and standing up against discrimination.



TIMES TABLES ROCKSTARS

Ready

Respectful

Safe

How to use Times Tables Rockstars A guide for parents

Times Tables Rockstars (TTRS) is a fun, online platform that helps children learn and practise their times tables. It builds confidence, speed and accuracy – skills that support maths across the curriculum.

1 Log in

Go to www.ttrockstars.com and log in with your child's school username and password.



2 Choose a mode

Your child can practise in different ways, including:



Garage

Learn the tables at your own pace.



Studio

Quick fire practise with a focus on speed.



Soundcheck

Answer questions in a set time.



Jamming

Play against other children and earn coins.

3 Track progress

You can check your child's progress on the parent page. See how many coins they earn, which tables they're practising and celebrate their achievements!



4 Make it part of your routine



Aim for short, regular sessions

Just 5–10 minutes a day can make a big difference.



Choose a good time

e.g. after school, at the weekend or before bed.



Encourage and praise

Celebrate effort and progress, not just scores.

Top tips for success

- ★ Let your child choose their own times tables to practise.
- ★ Try the different game modes to keep it fun and fresh.
- ★ Look for their coins and certificates – they love them!
- ★ Encourage them to challenge friends and classmates.
- ★ Remind them that 10 minutes a day really does make a difference!

Aspiration, Excellence
and Responsibility!





Notices

Year 6 Thinking about Secondary School?



Applications now open

for September 2027
Year 7 intake.



Visit open evenings

Look out for advertised
open evenings at local
secondary schools.



Up to six preferences

You can name up to six
schools. Dudley Council
advises including more
than one preference.



Closing date

31 October 2026

Make sure your application
is submitted by this date.



Find out more at:

www.dudley.gov.uk/secondary-admissions



Polite Notice

Children should not bring personal hand sanitiser into school unless this has been agreed in advance with the school office to meet an individual need. Handwashing facilities are available in school.

Sanitiser bottles must not be clipped to clothing or worn as accessories. Any unapproved bottles brought into school will be held safely by staff and returned to parents or carers.

Where an exception is agreed, suitable arrangements for storage and supervised use will be put in place.



What Parents & Educators Need to Know about AI COMPANIONS

WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Powered by generative AI models like ChatGPT and Google Gemini, AI companion apps and virtual chatbots such as Character.ai, Snapchat My AI, Replika and Talkie, allow users to create, customise, and chat to synthetic avatars around the clock. While many young people use them for harmless entertainment, creative writing or homework help, these tools are designed to simulate genuine human empathy, emotional bonding and deep friendship.

EMOTIONAL DEPENDENCY

AI companions are programmed to be endlessly agreeable, attentive, and available 24/7. Unlike human friendships, an AI companion never disagrees, sets personal boundaries, or gets tired. Young people (especially those experiencing loneliness, social anxiety, or low self-esteem) can quickly develop an unhealthy emotional attachment, viewing synthetic software as their 'best friend' or a surrogate romantic partner.

DANGEROUS MENTAL HEALTH ADVICE

AI chatbots possess no genuine empathy, professional clinical knowledge, or moral reasoning. While developers state these tools are not therapists, vulnerable teenagers often turn to them in crisis. Chatbots have previously hallucinated unsafe medical guidance, validated depressive spirals, and failed to safely escalate disclosures of self-harm or suicidal ideation to real-world protective services.

DATA HARVESTING & OVERSHARING

Because conversational bots simulate warmth and understanding, children often lower their guard and treat the chatbot as a trusted friend. They may disclose sensitive personal information, including full names, school details, private family problems, or secrets, unaware that their conversations are being logged, may be analysed by third parties (including advertisers), or used to train future AI models.

DISTORTED SOCIAL SKILLS

Navigating real-world friendships can be messy, involving dealing with conflict, compromise, boredom, and awkwardness. If a teenager spends hours interacting with an AI that is tailored specifically to validate and flatter them, they may become impatient with real-world relationships. Over time, this can lead to social withdrawal, heightened anxiety in peer groups, and isolation: a vicious circle of growing online dependency coupled with a heightened sense that relationships in the 'real world' are too challenging to maintain.

INAPPROPRIATE OR EXPLICIT CONTENT

While most mainstream platforms feature safety filters and guardrails, young people frequently discover 'jailbreak' prompts to bypass them. Some companion platforms subtly nudge users towards mature themes, romantic roleplay, or sexually suggestive conversations. In worse cases, third-party apps with weak safety checks have been found to generate sexually explicit text or intimate images.

"FREEMIUM" UPSELLS & SUBSCRIPTIONS

Many companion platforms operate on a freemium model. While basic chat is free, features like voice calls, uncensored responses, custom avatars, or 'deeper bonding' tiers are locked behind expensive monthly recurring subscriptions or in-app token purchases. This can lead to significant hidden costs and pressure on young people to spend money to maintain the 'friendship'.

Advice for Parents & Educators

TALK OPENLY ABOUT FAKE RELATIONSHIPS

Demystify how these tools work. Explain to young people that an AI companion has no feelings, memories, or consciousness; it is simply calculating the next most mathematically probable word based on its training data. It is helpful to explain to them the mechanics of large language models so that they understand how they are trained and how they are designed to always flatter and be helpful.

ENCOURAGE REAL-WORLD CONNECTION

Ensure technology habits do not replace face-to-face peer socialisation, sports, hobbies, and family time. Create healthy boundaries at home (such as keeping phones and tablets out of bedrooms overnight) to prevent late-night, unmonitored attachment loops with conversational chatbots when young people are at their most vulnerable.

AUDIT PRIVACY SETTINGS & AGE LIMITS

Check which companion apps are installed on your child's phone or tablet. Many dedicated companion apps carry an App Store rating of 17+, while platforms like Character.ai set a minimum age of 13+ (or 16+ in the UK/EU). Review the privacy settings together: turn off data-sharing toggles, disable model training where possible, and ensure location permissions are blocked.

REINFORCE WHERE TO GET REAL HELP

Make sure young people know that a machine can never replace professional pastoral or mental health care. Remind them of the trusted adults they can turn to at school – such as their Form Tutor, Head of Year, or the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – as well as dedicated youth support services like Childline (0800 1111) or Shout (text 85258).

Meet Our Expert

Darren Coxon is the Founder and Executive Director of Kompass Education, a consultancy specialising in supporting educators, students and parents in making wise choices with AI. His book *Ethical AI and Education*, co-authored with Clara Hawking, will be released later in 2026 by Taylor and Francis.



The National College

See full reference list on our website

[X @wake_up_weds](https://www.wake_up_weds.com)

[f /www.thenationalcollege](https://www.thenationalcollege.com)

[@wake.up.wednesday](https://www.instagram.com/wake.up.wednesday)

[@wake.up.weds](https://www.tiktok.com/@wake.up.weds)

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Summer Holidays - Planning Ahead!

With the summer holidays fast approaching, we know many families are beginning to think about next year's holidays.

We understand that family time is incredibly important, but taking holidays during term time can have a significant impact on your child's learning, friendships and confidence.

If you're looking to make your holiday budget go further, here are a few ideas that could help without your child missing valuable time in school.



Great holidays can be affordable!

TOP 10 MONEY SAVING TIPS FOR CHEAPER HOLIDAYS



- BE FLEXIBLE WITH YOUR DATES**
Prices are often much cheaper at the very beginning or end of the school holidays rather than during the peak weeks.
- TRAVEL MID-WEEK**
Flights on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays are often cheaper than weekend departures.
- COMPARE PRICES**
Use comparison websites such as Skyscanner, Google Flights or Kayak to compare prices and set up price alerts.
- CONSIDER DIFFERENT AIRPORTS OR DESTINATIONS**
Flying from a nearby airport or choosing a less popular destination can sometimes save hundreds of pounds.
- THINK ABOUT SELF-CATERING**
Apartments and holiday parks can often be more affordable than hotels, especially for families.
- USE LOYALTY POINTS AND CASHBACK**
Supermarket reward schemes, cashback websites and credit card rewards can all help reduce the overall cost.
- COMPARE ALL-INCLUSIVE WITH SELF-CATERING**
Depending on your family's needs, either option could offer the best value.
- BOOK EARLY (BUT NOT TOO EARLY!)**
For popular destinations, booking 8-12 months in advance can lock in better prices. For last-minute deals, 4-6 weeks before travel can sometimes be cheaper if operators are trying to fill seats.
- TRAVEL WITH FRIENDS OR FAMILY**
Renting a villa together or splitting costs (car hire, food, pool) can work out much cheaper than booking individually.
- WATCH OUT FOR HIDDEN COSTS**
Check baggage charges, transfers, resort fees and airport parking before booking so there are no surprises.

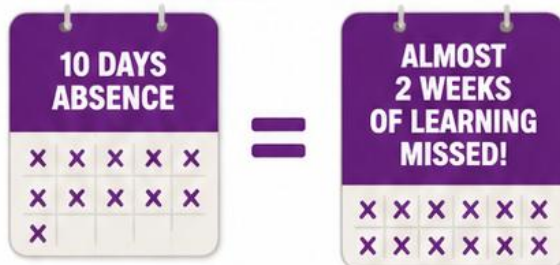
We're here to help!

If you need any support with attendance or have any questions, please speak to your child's class teacher or contact the school office.



EVERY DAY COUNTS!

Just 10 days of absence across the school year is almost two weeks of learning missed.



Good attendance helps children build confidence, maintain friendships and achieve their very best.

WHEN YOUR CHILD ATTENDS SCHOOL EVERY DAY, THEY BENEFIT FROM:



CONSISTENT LEARNING AND PROGRESS

They don't miss out on important teaching and build on their knowledge every day.



STRONG FRIENDSHIPS AND ROUTINES

Being in school helps children feel included, supported and part of the team.



IMPROVED CONFIDENCE AND WELLBEING

Good attendance builds self-esteem and helps children feel happy and secure.



THE BEST CHANCE OF ACHIEVING THEIR POTENTIAL

Every day in school is another step towards success and a bright future.

MISS SCHOOL, MISS OUT!

Thank you for working with us to make attendance a priority. Together, we can give every child the best possible start. ♥