

# Newsletter Issue 8



**Newsletter Issue 8**

**8th January 2026**





## Headteacher's News

Happy New Year

Welcome back and a Happy New Year to you all! May I take this opportunity to thank you all for your cards, gifts and kind wishes at the end of last term. I hope you all had a good break with your friends and family.

The children have been thinking about New Year Resolutions and being determined to keep them this week/ This encourages us all to think about things we want to change, start or stop. Our assembly to start the term focused on this and it was very interesting to hear what resolutions the children are working on.

Twitter / X

There are lots of exciting things planned for this term and it has been delightful to see the children return with such enthusiasm for learning. Please do follow our Twitter /X-feed if you are not already so you can keep up to date on <https://twitter.com/sissinghurstVA> . We are

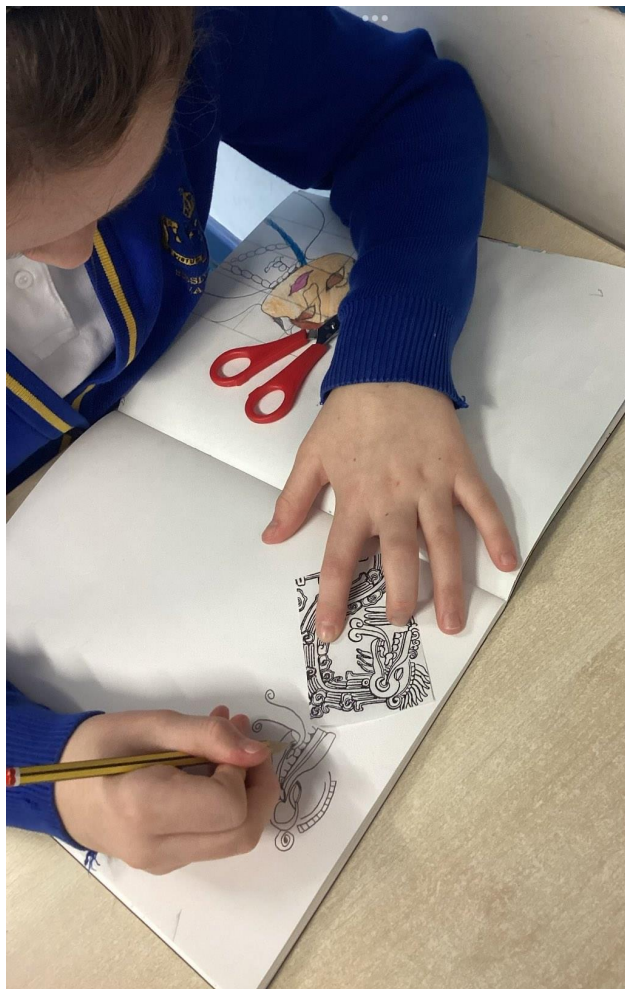
delighted to have over 235 followers so far. We include photos of each class and play and lunchtimes each week. Do have a look so you can see what wonderful things are going on in school.

Here are a few we have put up so far this week:

Creativity is leading the learning for Leopards in their art lesson today







The snow and ice is giving us so many new learning opportunities!





## Opal Play

It has been a great start to term 3 with so much exciting learning already taking place. Staff enjoyed a wonderful training day on the last day of term last year where we spoke about Opal Play and how it is going in school.

We are delighted that our play and lunchtimes are going from strength to strength. Children are enjoying them so much more and our behaviour and first aid incidents are reduced. The photos below (from Twitter last term) show the kinds of things going on to keep your children fully learning and enjoying themselves for every moment of the school day. We will be holding a non-uniform day later this month so you can bring in items for our playtimes. Almost everything on offer has been donated. Do remember that if you have anything similar to what you see and wish to pass it on to us – we are always very grateful for donations and remember too to book to join us for our weekly parent Opal lunchtimes too – we love sharing our playtimes with you all.





### Great pupils at Sissinghurst

We were delighted to receive comments at the end of term praising our pupils during their walk to and from the church service on the last day and also to the choir in their performance at The Trinity Café in the last week of term. It is always fantastic to hear such positives about our pupils and a great way to start the new year.

### Winter Weather

As the weather continues to be wintery questions will inevitably be asked about the school operating as normal. We sent a letter explaining this and how we operate if extreme weather. It can be found on our website here <https://www.sissinghurst.kent.sch.uk/page/?title=Letters+Home&pid=11> We will always endeavour to stay open and only in very rare circumstances would we consider closing. If this was a decision that we needed to take we would ensure that all parents receive a text / Studybug message as well as adding messages to our website and Twitter feed. Remaining open

may mean that the organisation of classes and staffing may alter slightly due to the potential for some staff not being able to travel to work. Please avoid calling the office to check if the school is open as it will be unless you receive a message.

For new families to Sissinghurst, we send a fortnightly newsletter each fortnight on a Thursday. Please do take the time to read the contents and check diary dates to keep well informed with all that is going on in school.

I hope you have a lovely weekend when it gets here.

Best wishes,

Sarah Holman



[Click here for dates](#)

## Staffing

We welcome Mrs Dolan who is a highly experienced Teacher, HLTA and TA who is joining us this term to compliment our existing staff team. She will be working in Y3 mostly.

## Reading importance – The Year of Reading - 2026

You may have read or seen in the news that the Education Secretary is calling on parents to lead by example and make reading a daily habit to help reverse the decline in reading for pleasure, to help give children the best start in life as part of the Plan for Change.

The call comes as the Department for Education and National Literacy Trust join forces to launch a National Year of Reading, starting in January 2026 to kick start a reading revolution. It will reverse the trend as just [one in three aged 8 to 18](#) said they enjoyed reading in their free time in 2025.

Bringing together parents, schools, libraries, businesses and literacy experts, the campaign aims to foster a love of reading for pleasure in children and young people, ensuring all children get the best start in life.

Reading for pleasure isn't just a hobby. It's linked to a range of benefits including stronger writing skills, improved wellbeing and confidence, and even higher future earnings, with new data showing those proficient in reading and writing in primary school [earn £65,000 more over their lifetime](#).

Reading at Sissinghurst has always been a priority and a strength, with children learning to read sounds and words from the start in Lions and most children reading short paperback books by the end of Y2 (or the old 'infant' phase of primary school). This prepares children for KS2 (juniors) well, meaning children can read more complex text in all subject areas, enabling them to do well. Teachers use Widgit (images) to support more complex vocabulary so all children can access and use this correctly in their learning.

Children who struggle to read have specialist lessons to ensure they catch up and can read at a level appropriate for them and make good progress. Our skill and love of reading ensures children are ready for secondary school when they leave us at the end of Y6. Reading was praised by Ofsted last year and continues to strengthen, with visitors to the school always commenting on how well resources we are for reading and how the children at Sissinghurst love to read. We cannot wait to promote reading further in the year of reading!

Online, kindle & tablet newspapers for children & teens, many free to download & read, we pick the best options for schools & home learning

<https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/resources/magazines-and-newspapers-for-children-and-teenagers/> #YAlit #homelearningFrom schoolreadinglist.co.uk12:42 pm · 5 Jan 2026



Our primary school booklists:

Nursery <https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/reading-lists-for-ks1-school-pupils/100-best-picture-books-to-read-before-you-are-5-years-old/>

Reception <https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/reading-lists-for-ks1-school-pupils/reception/>

Y1 <https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/reading-lists-for-ks1-school-pupils/year-1/>

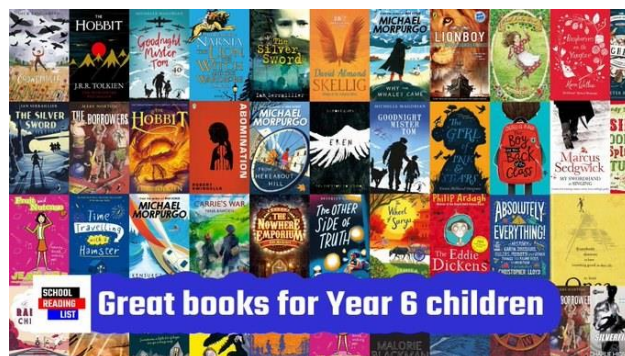
Y2 <https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/reading-lists-for-ks1-school-pupils/year-2/>

Y3 <https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/reading-lists-for-ks2-school-pupils/year-3/>

Y4 <https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/reading-lists-for-ks2-school-pupils/year-4/>

Y5 <https://schoolreadinglist.co.uk/reading-lists-for-ks2-school-pupils/year-5/>

Y6 link below:





# Tunbridge Wells Family Hubs

## Timetable

5 January - 13 February 2026

### Our Family Hubs:

<b>Sherwood</b> 03000 418059 Friars Way Tunbridge Wells TN2 3JA TWFamilHub @kent.gov.uk	<b>Tunbridge Wells</b> 03000 418059 39A Grove Hill Tunbridge Wells TN1 1SD TWFamilHub @kent.gov.uk	<b>Cranbrook Outreach</b> 03000 418059 Carriers Road Cranbrook TN17 3JE TWFamilHub @kent.gov.uk
---	--	---

PLEASE NOTE - our weekly drop-in groups will resume week beginning 12 January

All of our groups and services are free to attend

<b>Monday</b> Tunbridge Wells Baby Group 10:30am-11:30am weekly drop-in	Sherwood Talking Walk-in 9:30am-11:30am (3rd Monday of each month)	Virtual Session Parent IAG for parents of children aged 11+ 6:30pm-7:30pm weekly	Tunbridge Wells Compass Age 1+ 4:00pm-6:00pm weekly (from 12/1)
<b>Tuesday</b> Sherwood Little Talkers 10:30am-11:30am 6 week course	Tunbridge Wells Young Parents Stay & Play 11:00am-1:00pm weekly drop-in	Sherwood Baby, Family & You 1:00pm-3:00pm 4 week course	Tunbridge Wells Baby Massage 2:00pm-3:00pm 5 week course
<b>Wednesday</b> Sherwood Healthy Child Clinic and infant feeding support 9:30am-11:30am weekly drop-in	Woodlands Health Centre, Paddock Wood Healthy Child Clinic and infant feeding support 9:30am-11:30am weekly drop-in	Sherwood The Communication Tree 1:00pm-2:00pm 4 week course	Sherwood Time to Shine Ages 7-11 3:30pm-4:45pm weekly
<b>Thursday</b> Cranbrook Outreach Healthy Child Clinic and infant feeding support 9:30am-11:30am weekly drop-in	Sherwood Baby Massage 9:30am-10:30am 5 week course	Sherwood Baby Group 10:30am-11:30am weekly drop-in	Tunbridge Wells Strengthening Family Relationships 9:30am-12:30pm Workshop
<b>Friday</b> Sherwood Stay & Play with Little Bookworms 9:30am-11:00am weekly drop-in	Cranbrook Family Hub will relocate to Cranbrook Library in February 2026. To mark this exciting move, we're running two special groups this term to thank the community for their support and share details about our upcoming co-location.		
<b>Monthly</b> Tunbridge Wells Speak Out Ages 11-19 3:00pm-5:00pm last Wednesday of each month	Cranbrook Family Hub 'CELEBRATION' Baby Group (final group in our current location) Friday 9 January 10:30-11:30am drop-in		Cranbrook Family Hub 'CELEBRATION' Stay & Play (final group in our current location) Wednesday 14 January 11:15-2:45pm drop-in

Please Note: Signing in will not be available until 10 minutes before the session starts.

www.kent.gov.uk/familhub

Family Hub Sites are run by Kent County Council

## Information

**WEEKLY GROUPS NO BOOKING REQUIRED**

**Baby Group**  
Weekly drop-in Session  
Sessions include sensory play, heuristic play and singing, plus a chance for parents and carers to meet and receive advice and support for babies to socialise with other babies.  
Session age: newborn to walking

**Young Parents Stay and Play**  
Weekly drop-in Session  
For young parents (U21 or U25 if SEND) to try different activities for early learning goals, including messy play, role play and arts and crafts.  
Sessions finish with story time and singing.  
Session age: 0-5 years

**Stay and Play with Little Bookworms**  
Weekly drop-in Session  
Our themed play session with a wide range of activities for parents/carers and their children to enjoy together. Including free book packs from Bookstart with tips and guidance on reading.  
Session age: 0-5 years

**DCSM Locations Engagement Bus**  
Drop-in Sessions  
*NOT last Wednesday of the month*  
Come along and meet the team, have a chat and enjoy an engaging activity.  
Advice and support always available.  
For young people aged 11-19

**WEEKLY GROUPS BOOKING REQUIRED**

**Time to Shine SEND Weekly Group (INVITE ONLY)**  
Tuesdays for ages 12+  
Wednesdays for ages 7-11  
at Sherwood  
A small bookable group for young people with neurodivergent needs. The group helps children build skills to thrive in a neurotypical world.

**Parent IAG Information and Guidance**  
Weekly VIRTUAL slot  
Raising a teenager is challenging. Arrange a conversation with a Family Hub worker for one-to-one support and advice.  
For parents/carers of young people aged 11+  
at Sherwood

**Compass**  
Weekly Group (REFERRAL ONLY)  
Weekly Group  
A weekly wellbeing programme and social group for young people based on Dialectical Behaviour Therapy skills (DBT)  
For young people aged 11-19

**Speak Out**  
Monthly Group (INVITE ONLY)  
Speak Out is all about empowering young people, whether you're already a Youth Peer Mentor or thinking about becoming one. The group gives you the chance to help shape youth-led projects, support district youth forums, and even get involved in recruiting new staff for KCC. It's a great way to make your voice heard and help drive positive change in your community.  
For young people aged 11-19

**COURSES/WORKSHOPS BOOKING REQUIRED Please email: TWFamilHub@kent.gov.uk**

**Little Talkers**  
6 Week Course  
Starting: 13 January at Sherwood  
A course for parents/carers and their children, to learn new techniques and useful hints and tips for developing your child's speech. During the sessions there will be some focussed 'fun' activities for you to do with your child, as well as some group time to improve listening skills and turn taking.  
Session age: 2-5 years

**Baby Massage**  
5 Week Course  
Starting: 13 Jan at Tunbridge Wells  
15 Jan at Sherwood  
A five week course where you will learn massage techniques to support bonding and physical aspects of baby development.  
Suitable for babies from 8 weeks to pre-crawling

**Strengthening Family Relationships Workshop**  
11 Feb ON-LINE  
This workshop is to improve the lives of children whose parents are in conflict, be that in an intact family, or separated. Learn new strategies that can be implemented at home.  
Suitable for all parents/carers

**The Communication Tree**  
4 Week course  
Starting 14 January at Sherwood  
Looks at the different ways children communicate and will teach techniques to encourage communication by looking at activities and strategies you can do at home with your child.  
Suitable for parents/carers of children aged 2-5 years

**Baby, Family & You**  
4 Week Course  
Starting: 13 January at Sherwood  
Gain practical strategies to create the best environment for your baby's development and feel more confident in your parenting journey.  
Get your Baby, Family and You off to a positive start!  
Suitable for parents/carers of children up to 12 months old

We work closely with Kent Adult Education who have a great selection of courses available, these are promoted on our social media platforms.

Your Health Visitor/Family Support Worker and other professionals are able to make referrals for you to attend other appropriate courses held within our Family Hubs and on-line, please contact us for more information.

**SESSIONS RUN BY OUR PARTNER AGENCIES**

**Child Health Clinic & Infant Feeding Support**  
Weekly drop-in Sessions  
A drop in clinic for you to come along, have your baby weighed and speak to a member of the Health Visiting Team. Infant feeding information, advice and support is also available.  
Please arrive 15 minutes before the end of the clinic.

**Talking Walk-in**  
3rd Monday of each month  
A play-based drop-in session where you can speak to a speech and language therapist if you are concerned about your pre-school child's speech, language or communication skills.  
Session age: pre-school children

**Twins & Multiple Birth Group**  
2nd and 4th Monday of each month 9.30-11.30am at Sherwood  
Run by TN Twins. A Stay & Play session for families with twins or multiple births.  
email: info@TNtwins.uk  
Session age: 0-5 years

**Family Carers Support Group**  
1st Wednesday of each month 10.00-12.00pm at Tunbridge Wells Family Hub  
For carers with 'Special Guardianship Orders' or informal fostering arrangements. Run jointly by Kinship Carers and KCC Special Guardianship & Therapeutic Fostering Support Team.  
For more information call: 03000 418059

**Free for 2**  
Some 2 year olds can get up to 15 hours of free childcare per week.  
For more information and how to apply.

**Healthy Start Vitamins**  
Are you eligible for Healthy Start Vitamins?  
Complete this form to order Vitamins to your door.

Useful Contact Numbers:  
Health Visitor: 0300 7900 243 Midwife: 01892 638 458

[www.kent.gov.uk/familhub](https://www.kent.gov.uk/familhub)

## News & Events

For upcoming local events in the parish of Cranbrook & Sissinghurst:

<https://cranbrookandsissinghurstpc.co.uk/whats-on/upcoming-events/>

Sign up to receive 'Be In The Know' emails from the parish council:

<https://cranbrookandsissinghurstpc.co.uk/>

Or follow the Parish Council Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/CranbrookandSissinghurstPC>

---

**Sissinghurst (VA) Church of England Primary School**

Common Road, Sissinghurst, Kent TN17 2BH

Tel: 01580 713895 / Fax: 01580 710051

[office@sissinghurst.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@sissinghurst.kent.sch.uk) / <http://www.sissinghurst.kent.sch.uk>

Office opening hours are 08.30am to 3.30pm (term-time only)