

Icknield Infants' WEEKLY NEWSLETTER



November 2026

• BRAVE | ✦ CURIOUS | ◆ TEAMWORK | • FOCUS

A WORD FROM MRS SQUIRES

A very warm welcome back to all our families. I hope last week afforded you some time with the family and a slower pace to life (or more juggling of work and parenting!).

It has been wonderful to be back at school, and we have already been busy across the school. Highlights this week have included photos, a Bonfire-themed lunch and a road safety assembly, but much more is outlined across the newsletter.

Another thank you to our parents and carers for working so closely and collaboratively on attendance. As you will be aware, schools are held strongly to account for their pupils' attendance and there is a target of 97% set for all schools by the government. The local authority monitors this closely and Ofsted judgements can be affected by poor ongoing attendance. Our year-to-date attendance continues to be an improvement on last year and we have many more families working with us to get their children into school every day, on time, as often as they possibly can. This has such an impact on children's learning, and it is fantastic to see these numbers continuing to rise.

In terms of weekly attendance, the winners this week are Penguin and Butterfly. They were very pleased to win the attendance bears, who they can enjoy staying in class with them next week.

This half term is one of the busiest in the year, with lots of events and special days. Do please check out the dates section for events each week, as we add in more as they are booked. Highlights include carols, Christmas shopping day and the EYFS Nativity.

Have a lovely weekend, whether you stay home or enjoy a fireworks celebration.

THIS WEEK AT ICKNIELD

STAFF PROFILE



Hi, I'm Mrs Calvert, the school's new(ish) Family Support Worker and Attendance Lead. I've spent many years working with children and families in schools, and I'm really excited to be part of the Icknield community.

My role is all about supporting families and helping children make the most of every school day. Whether you need a listening ear, some advice, or support with attendance, I'm always happy to help. Outside of school, I enjoy spending time with my family and grandchildren, reading, baking and swimming. I look forward to getting to know you all! 😊

CELEBRATION CORNER

Please do consider sharing any successes from home to share with the school community. All successes are welcome. You might share any of the following:

- Milestones (no matter how small)
- Showing school values or learning powers
- Arts, sports or music achievements
- Anything that shows going above and beyond e.g. extra learning

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

We add new events and dates regularly as we book in trips, visitors, etc., so please check back regularly to make sure you have access to all the dates you need. These can also be found on the school website here.

November

Children in Need: Crazy Hair Day – **Friday 13th November**

Flu Vaccinations mop up – **Friday 20th November**

Open Evening for Prospective Parents – **Wednesday 25th November 3:30-6:00**

December

EYFS Nativity 1 (time TBC) – **Wednesday 2nd December**

EYFS Nativity 2 (time TBC) – **Thursday 3rd December**

Nursery Walk to the Letterbox – **Thursday 3rd December**

Decorations Day – **Friday 4th December**

PTA Non-uniform day – **Friday 4th December**

Fundraising Toy Sale – **Monday 7th December**

Nursery Singalong – **Wednesday 9th December**

Christmas Jumper Day – **Thursday 10th December**

Reception: Robots Search for Snow – **Thursday 10th December**

iRock concert (time TBC) – **Thursday 10th December**

Christmas Shopping Day – **Friday 11th December**

PTA Christmas Market and Grotto – **Friday 11th December**

TBC PTA Grotto Day 2 – **Monday 14th December**

Christmas Lunch – **Wednesday 16th December**

PTA PJs and movie time TBC – **Friday 18th December**

End of term 1:40p.m. – **Friday 18th December**

Monday 21st December – Friday 1st January – Christmas Holidays, school closed to pupils

Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th January – INSET days, school closed to pupils

SCHOOL STORIES

NO OUTSIDERS





This week, our No Outsiders assembly focused on celebrating diversity, inclusion and belonging. The children explored how our differences make us unique and discussed the importance of treating everyone with kindness, respect and fairness. I was particularly impressed by how confidently pupils were able to talk about the values that help us live well together.

As part of the assembly, I asked children to recall the British Values and they were able to do so with ease, demonstrating a strong understanding of democracy, individual liberty, mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. One pupil also made a thoughtful link to the Equality Act 2010, explaining how it helps to protect people from unfair treatment. It was wonderful to see the children's growing understanding of inclusion and how these important values help us create a welcoming and respectful school community for everyone.

ROAD SAFETY

Today we were very lucky to be in receipt of a free road safety assembly for our key stage one (year one and two) pupils run by the local authority. Mrs Elliot, our visitor, talked to the children about stopping distances at 20 and 30mph, talked about safe road crossing and showed them a video demonstrating why it is hard to stop the faster a car is going/person is running. The assembly was very visual and hands-on and the children really enjoyed it. Your child will be bringing home a card with a QR code on it – this will take you to a link where you can share your views on local speed limits. If you would like a QR code, spares can be located in the foyer outside the school office.







We also had a PCSO visiting this morning to monitor parking around the local area and moving on drivers who had parked or stopped dangerously or illegally. These checks, and others from the LA will be happening randomly and there could be fines for anyone parking illegally. Thank you so much to all of you for working with us to park responsibly and keep our young children safe as they come to school.

CLUBS

A reminder that parents and carers can sign children up for Choir Club on School Gateway and this closes on Monday 9th November. Choir will run from Monday 16th November - Monday 14th December (inclusive) 3.30pm-4.15pm. An email will be sent later next week to confirm if your child has been allocated a place.

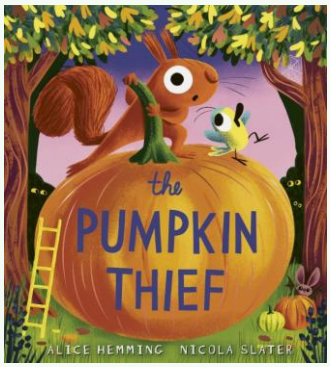
LOOK WHAT WE'VE BEEN LEARNING!

NURSERY

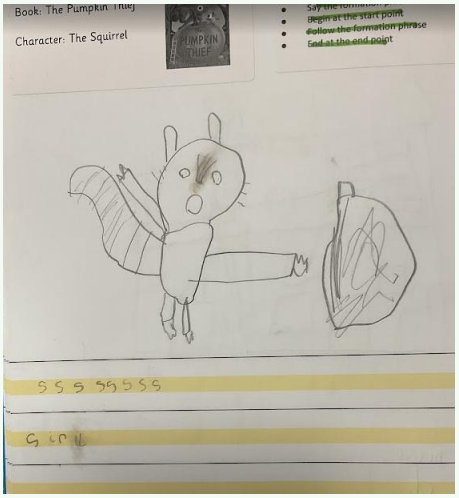
Please see Tapestry for Mrs Maw's weekly update. If children have any interesting play moments, show school values or learning powers, or just want to share something from home with their teacher, please do upload it on Tapestry. Don't worry about lots of text – a simple photo and small caption is perfect!

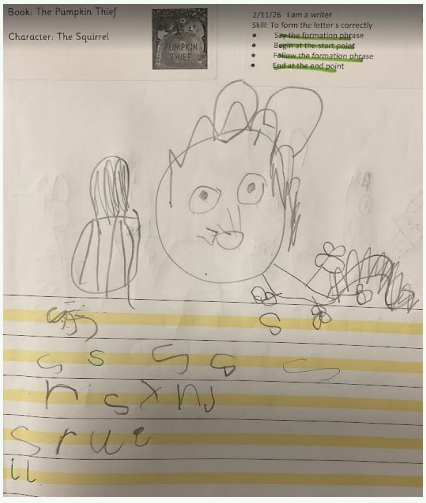
RECEPTION

This week in **Drawing Club** we read the book **'The Pumpkin Thief' by Alice Hemming.**



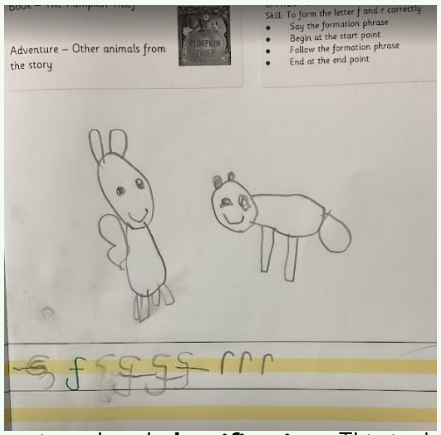
Our first session focused on the **character.** The children were asked to draw the squirrel and then we focused on the formation of the letter 's'. We practised saying the phrase we use in phonics, **"from the head to the tail down the snake".**





We also drew a pumpkin patch for the setting, a speech bubble for the squirell who was asking for **'help'** and the bird as the suspect.

On Friday we drew different characters from the story – the fox and the rabbit. We focused on the correct letter formation for **r** and **f.**





In Maths we introduced **classification.** This is the pr[illegible] The children were very confident with this skill and enjoyed the adult directed activity of classifying the blocks to whether they were blue or **not** blue.

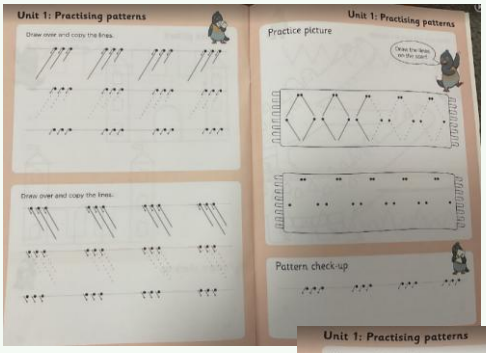
Phonics

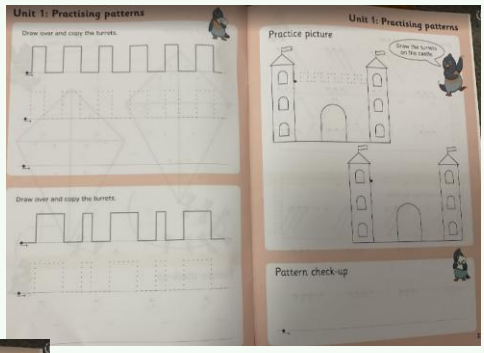
In phonics this week we have been focusing on **digraphs (2 letters that make 1 sound.** Our new sounds are **ll, ff, ss and j.**

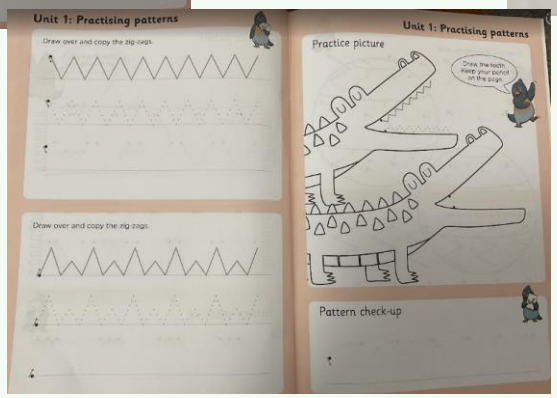


Handwriting

Below are our handwriting patterns from this week.







<u>Volunteers needed!</u>

Thank you to the volunteers that have already contacted me. We still need lots more!

In December (Thursday 10th) we will **walking** to the Broadway Gallery to watch **Robot's Search for Snow.** We will need volunteers to support us with walking the children down. We will be leaving at 9am and returning about 11:30am.

If you would like to volunteer then please speak to **Miss D'Souza.**

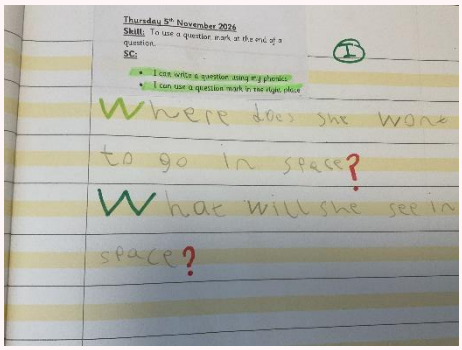
<u>Reminders:</u>

- **Please label all clothing (including shoes, wellies, water bottles, coat and spare clothes)**
- **Spare clothes to be in a drawstring bag or plastic carrier bag (not a rucksack)**
- **Bookbag to be brought to school every day.**
- **Coat to be brought to school every day.**

YEAR ONE

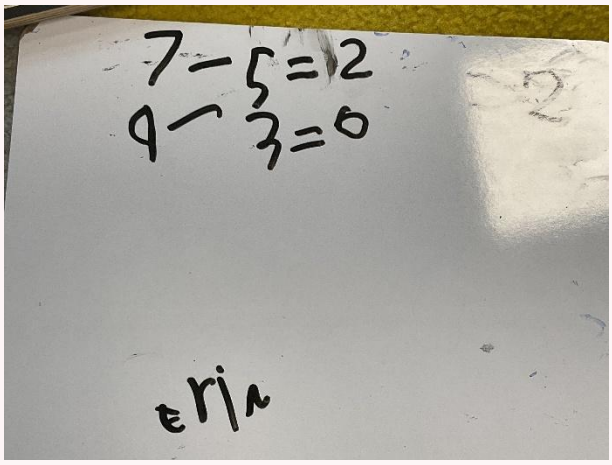
This week in English, we have started our new book Astro girl and we have been learning to write sentences about Astrid. The children are beginning to use capital letters and full stops correctly, as well as including interesting adjectives to make their sentences more descriptive. We are also starting to introduce verbs and exploring how they help to bring our sentences to life as well as writing questions to find out more information about the book.





In Maths, we are beginning to explore subtraction. We are using part-whole models and ten frames to help us understand how to take away and find the difference. The children are developing their confidence in using these practical resources to support their learning.





In Science, we have continued our learning about the seasons. We have been talking about the different changes we notice as the seasons change, including the weather, the environment and how the world around us looks and feels.





In Music we have been having lots of fun exploring rhythm through our music lessons! We listened to and appraised different pieces of music, including *The Planets – Mars* by Gustav Holst and *Tubular Bells* by Mike Oldfield, discussing how the music made us feel.

We learned to sing 'Rhythm in the Way We Walk', warming up our voices, adding actions and moving to the beat. Through fun musical games and Bronze, Silver and Gold challenges, we practised keeping a steady pulse, clapping rhythms and listening carefully.

We also explored the different dimensions of music, including pulse, rhythm, pitch, tempo, dynamics and timbre, discovering how music can be fast or slow, loud or quiet, and use high and low sounds. Finally, we worked together to perform the song, learning about its different sections, from the introduction and verses to the tag ending.

The children have worked brilliantly, developing their musical listening, singing and performance skills while showing lots of enthusiasm, confidence and creativity. Well done, Year 1!

squirrelclass@icknieldinfants.herts.sch.uk

foxclass@icknieldinfants.herts.sch.uk

A Few Reminders

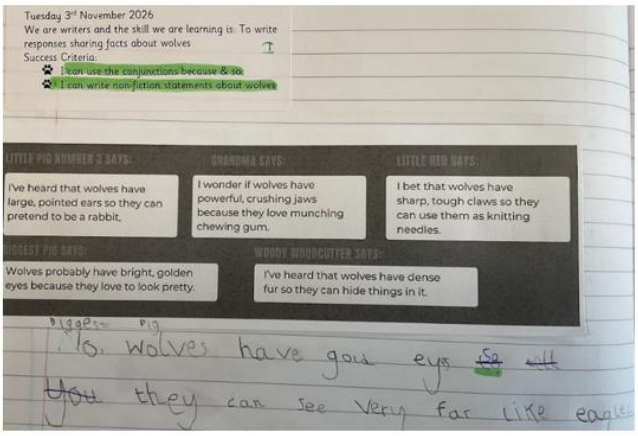
PE days:

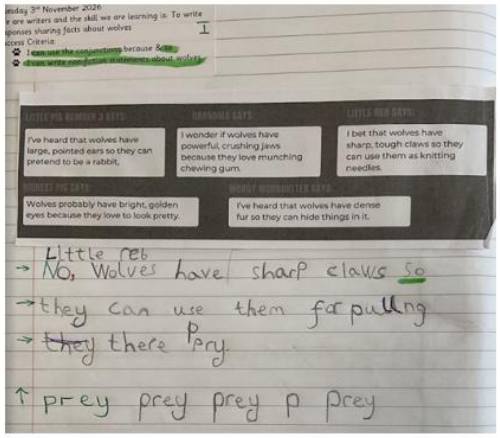
- 🦊 **Fox Class:** Monday
- 🐿️ **Squirrel Class:** Tuesday

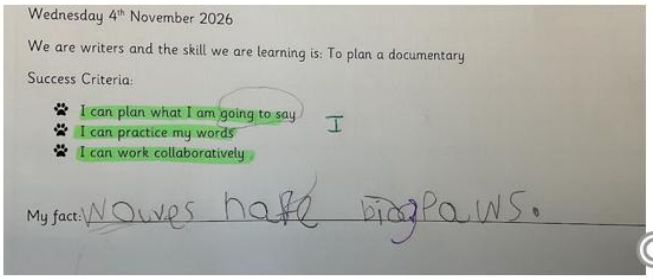
Please ensure **PE kits are kept on your child's peg in school**. Please also bring in a **named pair of wellies** for your child to leave in school. These will be useful for outdoor learning and play.

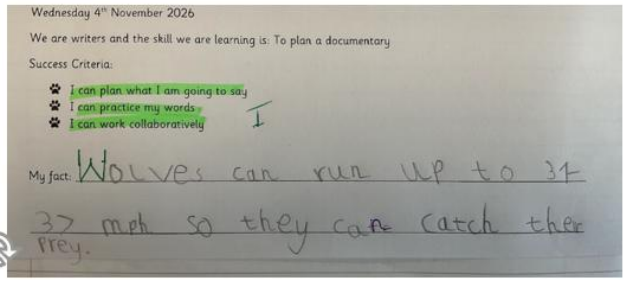
YEAR TWO

We were delighted to welcome Year 2 back this half-term and continue our learning on the book *Wolves* by Emily Gravett. We have been looking at some online comments from fictional characters such as a Little Pig and Red Riding Hood who had spread some rumours about wolves that were not really true. We put these right with our own responses. Also, inspired by great documentary makers such as David Attenborough, we've worked collaboratively to create our own documentaries all about wolves. We were so impressed with how the children used our Learning Superpower of Teamwork to bring these together.

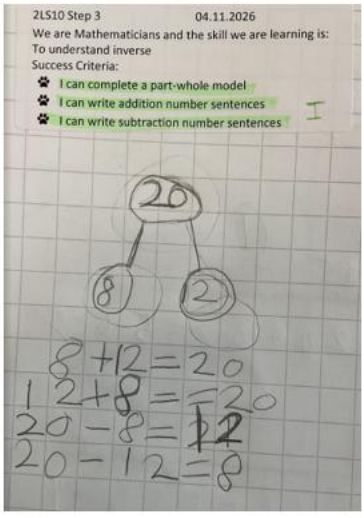


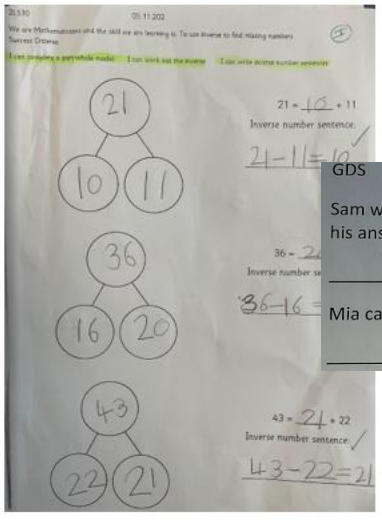


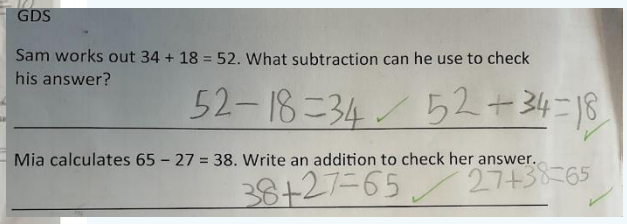




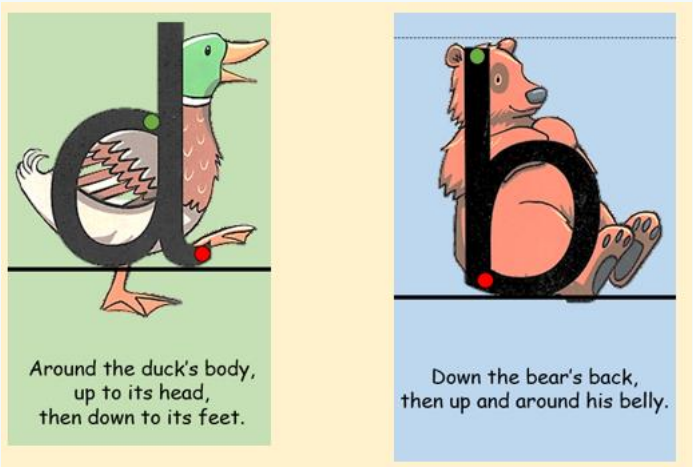
In maths we've been looking at inverse operations. We've been noticing that addition is the opposite of subtraction and writing different number sentences that could apply to our part-whole model. We have then gone on to use the inverse operation to find missing parts!







We have also had a particular focus this week on the letters b and d. We are working hard to ensure that, not only are they written the right way round, but that they are also formed correctly. Here are the formation phrases that we have been using.



Have a look at your child's writing at home and see if they begin these letters in the correct place.

We've had great fun as we have begun our new History topic, *Wonderful Inventions*. We have started by comparing Victorian and modern toys, thinking about what they are made of, how they work and how we know whether they are Victorian or modern. Next week, we are going to be designing and making our own inventions. Please could you bring in any junk materials or other spare items such as string or masking tape that you might be able to spare. There will be a donations box in the Year 2 canopy.



Year 2 Challenge

Toy Time Travel!

Talk to your family members, such as parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. Ask them about the toys they enjoyed playing with when they were children.

Can they remember what their favourite toys were and when they played with them?

Create a colourful poster showing the different toys you have discovered. Remember to include the year or time period when each toy was played with. Have fun finding out how toys have changed over time!

Reminders:

- Junk please! We will be making our own inventions next week and would really appreciate any donations or recycling and also any spare items such as string, Sellotape or masking tape.
- Please ensure your child has a labelled pair of welly boots – we have two labelled racks outside the classrooms to place welly boots on. As the weather is changing, welly boots will come in very handy if your child would like to use the mud kitchen and when it rains! We do have spare welly boots that will be available on the first week back if you would like to name a pair for your child to use at school. **Please check in with the class teacher before naming them.**

- We will be outside in all weather, so it may be useful to have a spare pair of socks/tights and items of clothing in a named bag for your children to change into if necessary.
- Reading books to be in **every Wednesday** ready to change and reading records to be in school **every day.**
- Purple Mash and Numbots logins: these can be found on the first page of your child's reading record. Numbots will be used more frequently next half term, so please do have a practice at home!

CLASSROOM CORNER

WHAT TO TALK ABOUT WITH YOUR CHILD THIS WEEK 🚶 🚲 🚗

This week, why not spend a few minutes talking together about staying safe near roads and when travelling? Road safety is an important life skill, and even young children can begin to understand how to make safe choices.

🛑 Why do we need to stop, look, listen and think before crossing a road?

👀 What things should we look out for when we are near a road?

🚶 Where is the safest place to cross the road?

🚗 Why is it important to wear a seatbelt every time we travel in a car?

📱 Why is it important for grown-ups not to use their phones when crossing the road?

🚲 What safety equipment should we wear when riding a bike or scooter?

🤔 What could happen if someone runs into the road without looking?

⭐ Can you think of three things you can do to keep yourself safe on your journey to and from school?

💬 What is one road safety tip you could share with someone else this week?

🏆 Why is being responsible and making safe choices important, even when you're in a hurry?

TRY THIS AT HOME

Autumn Treasure Hunt! 🍂 🍁 🌰

Autumn is a wonderful time to get outdoors and explore nature together. On your next walk, visit to the park or journey to school, see how many signs of autumn you can spot!

Can your child find:

🍂 A colourful autumn leaf

🌰 A conker, acorn or seed

🐦 A bird getting ready for winter

🍄 A mushroom or fungus

🌳 A tree that has started to lose its leaves

Before you start, ask: 🤔 What changes do you think we might notice in autumn?

As you explore:

☑ Count how many autumn treasures you find.

☑ Compare colours, sizes and shapes.

☑ Talk about how autumn is different from summer.

☑ Listen carefully for the sounds you can hear outdoors.

🎯 Extra challenge: Can your child sort their findings into groups, such as things that are living, things that were once living, and things that have never been alive?

💬 Talk about it: Why do leaves change colour? How do animals prepare for winter? What is your favourite thing about autumn?

STAR CELEBRATIONS ★ ☆ ☆⋆

STARS OF THE WEEK

Very well done to our stars of the week! These children will enjoy a tea party (squash and biscuits) with Mrs Squires at some point next week. They will also choose a story sack to enjoy at home next weekend (to be returned by Wednesday please).

Caterpillar: River

Fox: Kendrick

Ladybird: Bluebell

Butterfly: Levi

Squirrel: Sam

Dolphin: Carmen

Penguin: Millie