



Secure, Stretch, Succeed – Working Together to Build Strong Foundations

Ian MacDonald (Headteacher)

As part of our school vision, **Secure, Stretch, Succeed**, we are focusing on helping every child develop strong foundations in reading, writing and maths. Secure knowledge and skills build confidence, independence and the ability to tackle more challenging learning.

Learning Journals and Home Learning Booklets

At **Parents' Evenings next week**, we will be giving families two resources to help support children's learning at home.

Learning Journals will include an individual target for reading, writing and maths, helping children and parents/carers understand their next steps. These will support our new approach to Parents' Evenings, where we are encouraging children to join discussions about their achievements, progress and learning targets.

Home Learning Booklets will provide opportunities to practise essential skills through reading comprehension, punctuation and grammar, and arithmetic questions. These activities are designed to revisit and strengthen the basics rather than introduce new learning.

Why Is Regular Practice Important?

Research shows that children learn and remember more when they regularly revisit skills they have already been taught. Developing fluency and confidence in the basics helps children become more independent and better prepared for new challenges.

Little and often really does make a difference! Short, regular practice sessions are more beneficial than completing lots of work at once. We encourage children to work through their booklets gradually and as independently as possible, with encouragement from home.

Answers will be included so that children and parents/carers can check their work, celebrate successes and identify areas needing further practice. The aim is to build confidence and understanding, not simply to get every answer correct.

Sharing Progress

We would like children to **bring their booklets into school on Friday 11th December** so teachers can see how they are getting on, celebrate their efforts and offer support where needed. The booklets will then go home again to be completed and **returned at our February Parents' Evenings**.

This will give children, parents/carers and teachers an opportunity to celebrate progress and discuss next steps, keeping children's learning at the heart of our Parents' Evening conversations.

By helping children **Secure** the basics, we give them the confidence to **Stretch** their thinking and ultimately **Succeed**.

Thank you for your continued support in helping every child build strong foundations and achieve their very best.



Year 6 Parents/ Carers – Secondary School Applications

You can now apply online for your child's secondary school (year 7) place for children starting secondary school in September 2027. Read about the [secondary \(year 7\)](#) school place application process. All applications received after 31st October 2026 will be treated as late and will only be processed after all on-time applications.

Attendance this week:

This week's attendance figures:

Year 1: 92.76%
Year 2: 98.28%
Year 3: 95.52%
Year 4: 94.48%
Year 5: 94.19%
Year 6: 90.00%

Congratulations to Year 2 for this week's highest attendance!





Harvest Festival – A Huge Thank You!

A huge well done to our fantastic **School Council**, who did an amazing job leading our Harvest Festival assembly! They spoke confidently to the children about the importance of Harvest Festival and reminded us all how important it is to help those in need.

We would also like to say a **massive thank you** to all our families who generously donated tins, pasta, rice and other food items. Thanks to your kindness, we collected an incredible **102.5kg of food!**

All donations have now been delivered to **Colchester Foodbank**, who were incredibly grateful for our generosity.

We are so proud of our School Council and our whole school community for coming together to make such a difference!

Miss Penwill



Reception Blast Off into Space!

This week, Reception enjoyed an exciting space themed adventure to celebrate Black History Month! We learnt all about the inspirational astronaut Mae Jemison, the first African-American woman to travel into space.

Inspired by Mae's incredible achievements, Reception followed in her footsteps and took on some astronaut training of their very own! Our budding astronauts worked incredibly hard as they bounced around on planets (space hoppers), launched rockets and travelled through space tunnels. Everyone showed fantastic determination, enthusiasm and teamwork as they completed their space missions! After successfully completing their training, our little astronauts boarded their rocket and blasted off back to Reception, where their classroom had been transformed into a magical, starry galaxy!

The children were full of excitement and ended their adventure with some space themed crafts, including making their very own astronaut helmets.

We are so proud of all our little astronauts for their hard work, enthusiasm and willingness to try new challenges. Just like Mae Jemison, they showed us that with determination and a little courage, we can all reach for the stars!

Miss Procter and Mrs Garrett





Play Champions of the Week

A huge well done to our wonderful Play Champions this week!

KS1 – Roman (Year 1) ☀

Roman has been recognised for always encouraging his friends to follow the playground rules, taking great care of the equipment and making sure everything is tidied away beautifully. What a fantastic role model!

KS2 – Cayden (Year 6) ☀

Cayden has been recognised for his thoughtful and caring nature. He always takes the time to check in with both adults and his peers to see how their day is going and makes sure everyone feels included and valued.

Well done Roman and Cayden! Keep up the fantastic work! ★

Miss Penwill



We're taking on a whole-school Run Pudsey challenge for BBC Children in Need!

On **Friday 13th November**, our children will be getting active and each taking on an amazing **2,026 metre challenge** to raise money for BBC Children in Need.

We would love as many children as possible to get involved! Simply **sign your child up**, share their fundraising page with family and friends and see how much we can raise together. Every donation, big or small, will help support children and young people across the UK – see the attached poster for more information.

☀ **Our challenge:** 2,026 metres

📅 **When:** Friday 13th November 2026

🐻 **The reward:** Children taking part can work towards their **Run Pudsey medal and certificate!**

[runPudsey - Take Part](#)

Can we make this our biggest fundraising challenge yet? **Dig out those trainers, get those sponsors coming in and let's Run Pudsey!**

Team Points Winners

Congratulations to the Blue team who are this half term's team points winners! Therefore, next Thursday, 22nd October, will be a non-uniform day for the blue team to celebrate their achievement.

School Dinner Menus

Next week, we will be on Week 1 of our Menus. The menus can be seen on the School Website at:

<https://www.elmsteadprimary.com/Dinner-Menus/>. **School dinners can be paid for electronically on Arbor.**



Never miss school notifications

Download the School Jotter Mobile App today and you'll get:



News and message notifications



School calendar access



Other links to useful resources



How to register

To access the app you will need to register your account:

1. Open the App
2. Click Register Account
3. Enter your registration code (you will get it from school)
4. Now register your account

If you already have an Account

1. Open the App
2. Tap Profile icon
3. Navigate to school list
4. Click Add School and enter your code





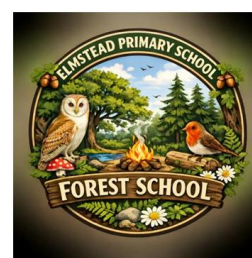
Diary Dates

Academic Year 2026/ 2027

Autumn Term 2026

Tuesday 20 th October	Parents' Evening – 3:30pm to 6:30pm
Thursday 22 nd October	Blue team only – non-uniform day
Thursday 22 nd October	Parents' Evening – 3:30pm to 6:30pm
Monday 26 th October	Half term holiday week
Thursday 5 th November	Year 3 Layer Marney Trip
Tuesday 10 th November	Tour for prospective new parents/ carers – September 2027 – 11:00am
Thursday 12 th November	Tour for prospective new parents/ carers – September 2027 – 2:00pm
Friday 13 th November	Children in Need Day – Run Pudsey
Wednesday 18 th November	Tour for prospective new parents/ carers – September 2027 – 2:00pm
Thursday 29 th November	Tour for prospective new parents/ carers – September 2027 – 11:00am
Friday 27 th November	Non-Pupil Day
Monday 30 th November	Non-Pupil Day
Monday 14 th December	pm – KS2 Carol Service
Tuesday 15 th December	Whole School Trip to 'The Wizard of Oz Musical'
Friday 18 th December	Last day of term

Forest School Dates for this term:



Forest School – Autumn Term 1

Week 1 8 th September	Week 2 15 th September	Week 3 22 nd September	Week 4 29 th September	Week 5 6 th October	Week 6 13 th October	Week 7 20 th October
Year 6	Year 6	Year 5	Year 5	Year 4	Year 4	Year 3

Forest School – Autumn Term 2

Week 8 3 rd November	Week 9 10 th November	Week 10 11 th November	Week 11 24 th November	Week 12 1 st December	Week 13 8 th December	Week 14
Year 3	Year 2	Year 2	Year 1	Year 1	EYFS	Pantomime

Your child's teacher will tell you which of the two groups your child is in (Group 1 or Group 2) so you know which session your child will be taking part in and when to bring in their Forest School clothes.