

Dear Gastrells Community,

A warm welcome back to you all—we do hope that you have had a restful half term and that the children are keen to begin the new term leading up to the end of the year. In this issue, we'll look back at our adventures during World Awareness Week and spotlight some of the lovely activities happening across the school.

A HUGE thank you to FOG for organising and hosting a fantastic Autumn Fayre at the end of last term—the buzz around school was just wonderful and a perfect reminder of what a special Gastrells parent community we have.

Look out for more details inside this week's newsletter!

NOTE FROM THE GOVERNORS...



As promised, slightly less abstract photographs attached of our new joint-chair governors Clare and Rhian!

Our governing board is keen to hear from everyone—staff, pupils, and our parent community, whose insight helps make Gastrells the special place it is. If you haven't yet completed the survey and would like to share what matters most to your family, please follow the link below.

[Gastrells Parent and Carer Survey 2025 - Shaping the Future](#)

SEND REQUEST

At the request of the Gloucestershire SEND Quality and Engagement Team, we're sharing a short survey for parents/carers of children with SEND. Your feedback will help build a fuller picture of SEND across the county. If you'd like to take part and share your experiences, please follow the link: [SEND Survey](#)

SAVE THE DATE!



Gastrells will once again join the beautiful Lantern Parade for Stroud Good Will on **Friday 5 December**, when the streets of Stroud are lit with the most magical paper creations.

Over the coming weeks, children across the school will be designing their creations then filling the corridors with willow-lantern making. This year's theme is 'Nature'—perfect for getting our creative juices flowing!

CONGRATULATIONS

THE MUSIC AMBASSADORS

Introducing our new Music Ambassadors!

Congratulations to our newly appointed Music Ambassadors—Maggie, Bay, Felix and Olivia—who will join Matilda, Danny, Maya and Ethan to form our Arts Ambassadors team for the year.

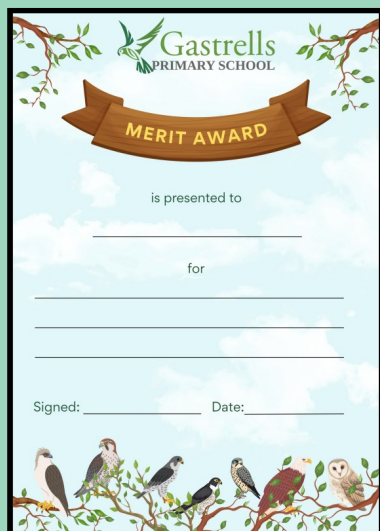


Their responsibilities will be significant as we enter the second phase of the coveted Artsmark award: a three-year commitment to excellence across Art, Music, Dance and Performance. A couple of years ago, Gastrells were proud to achieve the Silver Artsmark, and since then we've been working with focus and ambition toward an even higher accolade—Platinum, the highest accreditation given. It's a highly challenging goal and few schools receive it, but as continue to champion the arts and keep creativity at the heart of our school ethos, we are confident that we are making great steps towards our goal.

We look forward to sharing more news from our Arts Ambassadors as the year progresses.

SPECIAL AWARDS

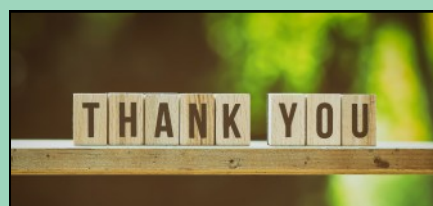
Congratulations to all the children who have received a special award this week (the last week of term of course was World Awareness Sharing so no Merit Assembly took place).



We can also now announce that our Merit Awards have undergone a makeover by Miss Mahaffy who was keen to make them more relevant for our school, with each of the class raptors adorning the award and giving the children a more polished certificate to celebrate their achievements, (and a size you can no pop onto the fridge!)

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who helped spread the word about our Open Mornings this month. We enjoyed two fantastic events where we stood back and let our Year 6 children take the lead, confidently showing visitors around and sharing the many special moments that make Gastrells so unique. Hearing them speak with such pride and clarity about their experiences was truly inspiring for our visitors. We couldn't be prouder of them all.

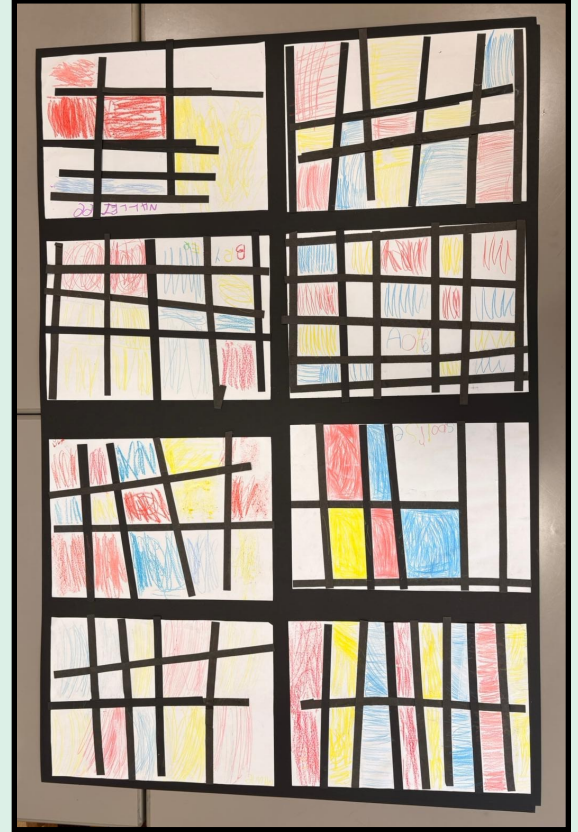


WORLD AWARENESS



THE NETHERLANDS “Dag”

Owls have thoroughly enjoyed their week learning all about the incredible country of The Netherlands. From windy mills and tulip fields, to Mondrian inspired posters, the children have certainly embraced their creative sides!



GERMANY “Hallo”



Peregrines class whisked their way to Germany by baking delicious Apfelstrudel!

Children peeled and sliced apples, measured cinnamon and sugar, and carefully rolled the flaky pastry before watching it turn golden in the oven.....delicious!

WORLD AWARENESS



What an experience for our Ospreys this year, as they made their own pasta from scratch! Children worked together to measure, mix, knead and carefully stretch the dough before turning it through a pasta press to create the most wonderful strands of Italian spaghetti. Delizioso!

The children also learned about the culture, art and history of this incredible country.

ITALY “Ciao”



ICELAND “Halló ”



Sparrowhawks have thrown themselves into all things Icelandic this week as they explored Iceland’s dramatic geography—discovering how tectonic plates shape the landscape with volcanoes, hot springs, and geysers, cooking Icelandic ‘Happy Marriage’ cakes and learning a traditional Icelandic line dance. Oh and lets also thrown in a few Icelandic fables and some Northern Light artwork in there too!



What a week they have had!



WORLD AWARENESS

LATVIA “Sveiki ”

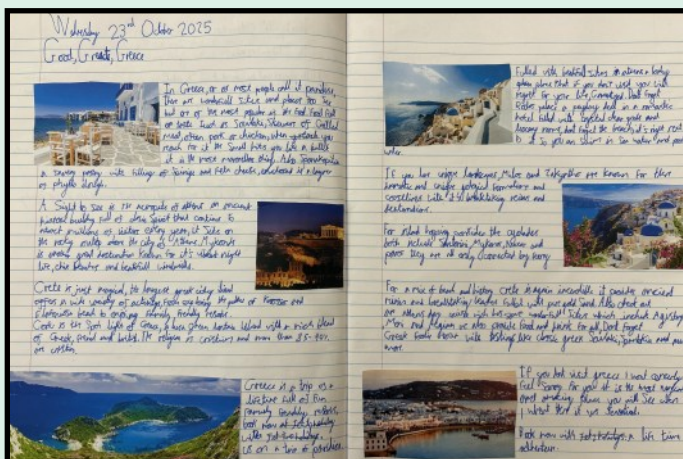
Goshawks have studied Latvia this year, learning about the Riga hydro power plant dam in the Daugava river, the country's geology as well as embracing Latvian folklore and culture.



GREECE “Γεια σας”



Eagles learned to count to 10 in Greek and carefully practised writing the alphabet. They mapped Greece using atlases, then worked as a team to perform a Greek dance—everyone joined in with wonderful energy and great confidence. To finish the week, pupils became ‘travel agents’ writing persuasive pieces for a travel brochure to highlight some of the interesting culture, cuisine, music and events! Well done Eagles—it’s been a fabulous week!



STROUD BOOK FESTIVAL

A FESTIVAL ON OUR DOORSTEP!

What an absolute treat to have such fabulous literary adventures within walking distance of our school!

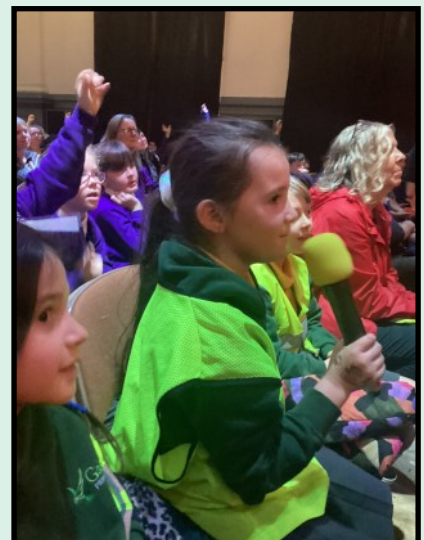
Over several days, children from across the school have joined the Stroud Book festival at the Subscription Rooms to dive into the magic of stories and storytelling.



Pupils met a brilliant line-up of authors and illustrators, including **Louie Stowell** (creator of the mischievous Loki series), **Frank Cottrell-Boyce** (author of *Cosmic* and *Noah's Gold*), and the much-loved duo **Rachel Bright** and **Jim Field**, co-creators of *The Lion Inside*. Each session brimmed with humour, heart and practical tips, sparking ideas about character, voice and how stories grow from questions. In true Gastrells style, our children showed their confidence and enthusiasm by listening intently, asked thoughtful questions, and volunteering for participation on the stage.....such enthusiasm was also seen by some of the staff members!! Mr C!!

The children certainly left buzzing with inspiration.

We feel incredibly lucky to have such a vibrant festival on our doorstep and are grateful for opportunities that make literature feel exciting and accessible to all. A huge thanks as always to the Stroud Book Festival team and the visiting authors; its always a highlight of Gastrells' annual calendar.

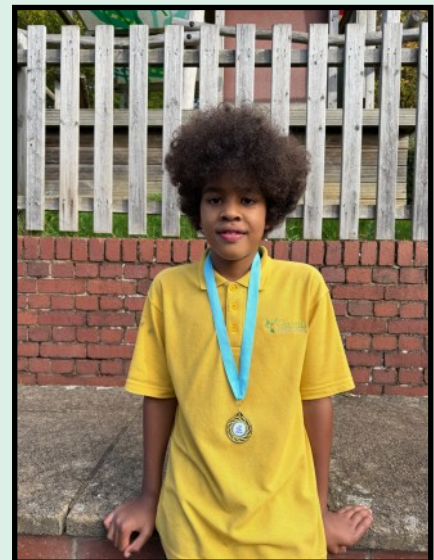


SPORTS

CROSS COUNTRY



A HUGE congratulations to all of the children who took part in the recent Cross Country event where over 10 local schools competed in what was an energetic and rather ambitious course! The Gastrells team did incredible well and not only striving for personal achievement, but they represented the school with such maturity and respect for other competitors as well as cheering on their teammates, which filled us with pride. A very special congratulations to Lilah and Idris from year 5, who both placed incredibly impressively; Idris coming 3rd and Lilah coming 1st place in their age groups! Just incredible!



KS1 ENDBALL

KS1 thoroughly enjoying their Endball games—full of enthusiasm and energy—what a fabulous morning out this was!



A SNAPSHOT OF LEARNING

TO BASK OR TO FLOAT?

Not quite finished in time for the last newsletter issue but we absolutely needed to still share these beautiful watercolour croc's with you all created by Sparrowhawks class!

Did you know that the collective noun for a group of crocodiles changes from a 'bask' to a 'float' if they are on the water!?

Sparrowhawks 'A Float of Crocodiles!



A special shout out to Bonnie who not only created a fabulous crocodile in the classroom, but also went home to teach her family the different techniques! From rice and salt to cling film, Bonnie remembered it all! Brilliant work Bonnie!

BISCUIT ANYONE??



Eagles have been busy creating their own biscuit ranges through taste testing flavour combinations to adapting recipes, baking prototypes and finally making their bespoke packaging from scratch! Some of these boxes designed are seriously impressive!! Well done Eagles... or should we say 'budding bakers!'



A SNAPSHOT OF LEARNING

DIWALI



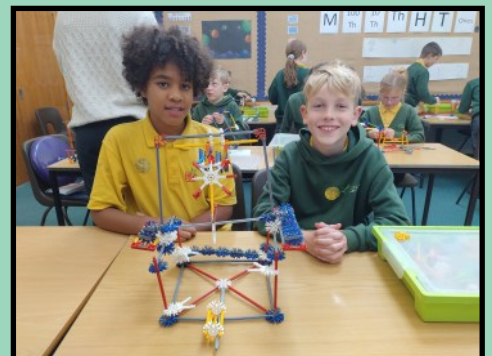
Owls Class have been learning all about Diwali; the Festival of Light, exploring how families celebrate new beginnings, kindness, and the triumph of light over darkness. The children discovered traditional customs such as lighting diyas, wearing colourful clothes, sharing sweets, and creating intricate Rangoli patterns.

A special highlight was a visit from Vijay, Lilah, and Nathaniel in Goshawks who kindly shared stories from their own celebrations outside of school.

KNEX CHALLENGE!

Last term, Goshawks and Eagles spent a full day tackling a KNEX engineering challenge. Working to clear design briefs and purposeful criteria, teams planned, built, tested and refined structurally sound, working creations—learning how triangles, braces and balanced loads boost strength and stability.

By the end of the day, classrooms were buzzing with models that not only stood but *worked*. The children loved the challenge and left with sharper STEM skills, resilience and real pride in their achievements.



AN AUTUMN EXTRAVEGANZA!

A MESSAGE FROM FOG

A HUGE thank you to everyone who came along to the Gastrells Autumn Fayre - we're thrilled to share that together we raised a fantastic **£2,623 !!**

The day was full of fun, pumpkins, crafts, games, music, and delicious food - and we've had so much lovely feedback from families who had a great time.

We couldn't have done it without the incredible support of our volunteers, stall holders, and all those who donated raffle prizes, cakes, books, pumpkins, and more. You made the day magical - and helped raise funds that will go directly towards updating the science equipment at Gastrells.

We do want to say though - these events only happen if people step up to help. Every stall, every activity, every prize takes time and energy to put together - and the more of us who get involved, the better (and easier!) it becomes.

PS. there are still a lot of prizes to be collected from the office and to please check the list to see if you're a winner!

Coming up next: The Treasure Room!

This magical festive event is always a favourite with the kids, and we're starting to collect donations of new or nearly-new gifts to stock it up. More info coming soon!

With huge thanks,

The Friends of Gastrells (FOG)



DIARY DATES

AUTUMN 2 TERM

NOVEMBER

03	INSET day
04	Term starts
05-07	Stroud Book Festival
07	Open Morning for prospective parents
07	KS2 Rugby
13	KS2 Sports Hall Athletics
12-13	Parents' Evening

DECEMBER

01	KS1 Multiskills
05	Stroud Lantern Festival, whole school
08	iRock concert
12	Treasure Room (FOG)
16	School nurse, heights/weights YR & Y6
17	Xmas Jumper Day & Christmas Lunch
17	Tabernacle Concert 6pm (Yr 3-6)
TBC	Owls & Peregrines Christmas performance
TBC	Santa Run!
19	Carols around the tree
19	End of Term 12.15pm

SPRING 1 TERM

JANUARY

05	Spring 1 Term Starts
07	Pantomime—Whole School
19	Inset day
27	Cheltenham Dance Festival
28	KS1 Sports Hall Athletics

FEBRUARY

02-22	Next Level Art Exhibition, Nailsworth
04	Girls Football
13	End of Term 3.15pm

TERM DATES 25-26

Term 1	Wed 3rd Sept	-	Fri 24th Oct 2025
Term 2	Tue 4th Nov	-	Fri 19th Dec 2025
Term 3	Mon 5th Jan	-	Fri 13th Feb 2026
Term 4	Tue 24th Feb	-	Fri 27th Mar 2026
Term 5	Mon 13th Apr	-	Fri 22nd May 2026
Term 6	Mon 1st Jun	-	Fri 17th Jul 2026

INSET DAYS

Mon	1st Sept 2025	Mon	19th Jan 2026
Tue	2nd Sept 2025	Mon	20th July 2026
Mon	3rd Nov 2025		

We will continue to add events to this page throughout the term.

DATES CONT...

SCHOOL TERMS AND HOLIDAYS

2025/26



Gloucestershire
COUNTY COUNCIL

SEPTEMBER

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Term Time		Holidays	
Bank Holiday			

Term 1: Mon 1 st Sept – Fri 24 th Oct 2025	40 days
Term 2: Mon 3 rd Nov – Fri 19 th Dec 2025	35 days
Term 3: Mon 5 th Jan - Fri 13 th Feb 2026	30 days
Term 4: Mon 23 rd Feb – Fri 27 th Mar 2026	25 days
Term 5: Mon 13 th April – Fri 22 nd May 2026	29 days
Term 6: Mon 1 st June – Mon 20 th July 2026	36 days
Total	195 days*

Christmas Bank Holidays	25 th December 2025
	26 th December 2025
New Year Bank Holiday	1 st January 2026
Good Friday	3 rd April 2026
Easter Monday	6 th April 2026
Early May Bank Holiday	4 th May 2026
Spring Bank Holiday	25 th May 2026
Summer Bank Holiday	31 st August 2026

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Stroud Christmas Markets

Thursday 18–Tuesday 23 December, 2025
Cornhill Market Place, GL5 2HE

Thursday 18th

Crafts • Gifts • Food
9am–4pm

Friday 19th

Crafts • Gifts • Food
9am–4pm

Monday 22nd

Crafts • Gifts • Food
9am–4pm

Saturday 20th

Stroud Farmers' Market
9am–2pm

Tuesday 23rd

Stroud Farmers' Market *Extra*
9am–2pm



Finish your Christmas shopping in Stroud

For further info: markets@fresh-n-local.co.uk • 07813 943237