Ellenbrook Express

Autumn Term 2026/2027

Welcome to the first edition of our school newsletter in the academic year 2026/27. Thank you for sending your children back looking as smart and being as enthusiastic as ever, it really has been a positive start to the term for our happy, thriving school.



We would like to extend a particularly warm welcome to those families who are new to Ellenbrook, we're sure you'll be made very welcome in this supportive community.

This newsletter comes out three times a year and is produced alongside the regular information sent via our Weduc and Seesaw apps, and our extensive website; it aims to add context to the events and activities which are advertised on those platforms and **give an overview of the main themes of school life this term.**



Lots of reading alert! It is the national year of reading, so we make no apologies for a lot of content in this newsletter, but there is quite a bit to get through. We are going with the premise that it is better to have too much information than too little, so we are informing you of a whole range of school-related matters which will be of interest or relevance to parents/carers, whichever phase of school their child is in.

Autmn term culture and ethos themes

In our assemblies and PSHRE (Personal, Social, Health and Relationship Education) lessons this term, we are looking at ensuring that we make the most of the opportunities we are given in the new school year, to fill our days with activity. Based on a quote from Abraham Lincoln – **'It's not the years in your life that count, but the life in your years'** – we are proving that even though our children may be young, their years can be filled with more life than many adults could manage! We are encouraging the children at the start of the year to try new things, take a more active part in lessons, play new games at breaktime, and more; we are discussing the importance of not being a spectator or a commentator of others' actions, but being a participator themselves.



In the **second half of the autumn term, we look at the subject of Light**, and how different cultures use this for celebrations in the darker months. We range from Hallowe'en and Bonfire Night to Diwali and Christmas, finishing the term with the Advent themes of love, peace, hope, joy and light – values that very much align with our school's.

Pupil Council Parliament Visit

Congratulations to the children photographed, who have been voted by their peers and staff as class representatives for the 2026/27 Ellenbrook Pupil Council and Eco-Team.



To start the year in style, the Y3-6 pupils in this group went down to London as guests of local MP Michael Wheeler to have a tour of Westminster, Parliament and Downing Street in a UK government scheme aimed at teaching children the value of democracy. It was the trip of a lifetime and our pupils represented the Ellenbrook community superbly. We give our very grateful thanks to Michael Wheeler and his team, who have been exceptional in their attention and support for our children, really going above and beyond to make his visit to school and then the trip to parliament such special occasions. Michael is pictured here with us, alongside government chief whip, Anneliese Midgley.

London Visit... in our own words: by Lucy Y6, Rory Y5, Freddy Y5 and Isabelle Y4

London was a truly remarkable trip, one no-one who went on it will forget. We started at 6.00am sheltering from the rain at school and saying how tired we were, but we were sooo excited!

Before long, we waved bye to our parents and set off. Upon arriving at Piccadilly we had one boy sick and getting on the train, another. Our sickness may have been broken... but our spirits were not!



Firstly, we walked down The Mall, the famous road where many things have happened, to Buckingham palace. So then we took a few quick photos and made a move. Along the way to Parliament we saw many things, the royal guards changing shifts, a statue of Winston Churchill, and more! When we arrived at Parliament, we had 5 minutes to eat a tad bit of our lunch, then we went through an airport-like security check, and then we said hello to our tour guide and went on with the tour. First of all, we walked up the staircase that King Charles walked up himself! Then we entered a grand lobby with a chandelier and a throne that Queen Victoria sat on; that did look astonishing! In fact, everywhere you looked was entirely dazzling, with stunning stained glass and striking carved patterns.

Then, we went in a place you've probably seen on the news - we went in The House Of Commons, where we weren't allowed to sit down, but stood at the speaker's chair and the PM's dispatch box - amazing to be in a place which is known world-wide!

After that, we walked to Downing Street where a protester kept shouting on about something. But then we walked into Downing Street where not many people get to go, and the star of the show was snoozing. Give it up for... LARRY!! The train ride was fun, the black taxis really cool, but the best thing was Larry the Downing Street cat!



After this, a boat tour on the Thames was also outstanding (the guide was so funny), as we saw Big Ben, St Paul's, The London Eye, the Tower of London and more, but in the end we had to go home.

London is a spectacular place with never-ending things to do and trust us we did lots of them. The trip was a life-changing experience, one we are so grateful to have been included in; it's one we will never forget.

Staff News

We are sure all of our families will join us in congratulating **Miss Boylan,** assistant headteacher, who has embarked upon a period of maternity leave following her adoption of a baby boy. The nature of this situation means the exact date could not be foreseen, so we could not tell families in advance. We all wish Miss Boylan well.

Another staff member to whom we send our very best wishes for similar reasons is **Mrs McShane**, Y1 teacher, who is expecting her second child and will be starting her maternity leave in November.

The last of our leavers – and this one is permanent – is **Mrs Jones**, teaching assistant in the Early Years, who retired at the end of September after 27 years' service at Ellenbrook. This length of commitment means that Mrs Jones will have impacted the lives of thousands of children, a legacy she can be very proud of and which earns our grateful thanks and admiration.

New starters



We have recruited four new staff to fill the vacancies above, so are delighted to welcome (from left to right) **Miss Richardson**, Y5 teacher, **Miss Mallard**, Y4, and two teaching assistants – **Miss Chew** (former pupil – how lovely for the school's values to come full circle) and **Mrs Heydari**. Each of these came through rigorous recruitment drives and saw off quality candidate fields, and each has already shown their work-ethic and care for our children. We are very pleased to welcome them to the Ellenbrook community.

Building developments

The **Daily Mile** track has been lengthened to wind through the trees at the back of our field, facilitating whole-school sessions each week, even in wet weather.

Inside, **three new rooms** for small-group focus have been constructed where the school library stood, whilst we've created mini-libraries in each age phase. A **music room** has been set-up and the **community room developed into the Acorn Room**, a multi-sensory space for children of all ages. We aim to add an outside area to this in the new year, fenced off from the car park.

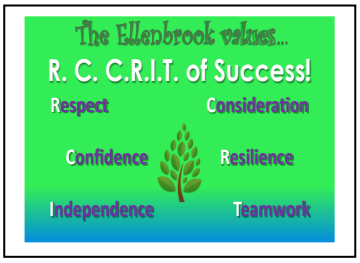


Parents' Evening

Although there is some convenience in having one of our parents' evenings carried out remotely, we feel it important that families get chance to see their child's books, learning environment and staff in person, and also to have the chance to further strengthen the relationships between home and school which really make a difference to a pupil's progression. Therefore, both parents' evenings this year – autumn and spring – will be held in person. If any families can't make this, we can arrange alternative times.

Behaviour and Wellbeing Policy

Pupil **behaviour and ethos at Ellenbrook is excellent** and we wanted to update our behaviour policy to reflect this more overtly, to ensure child-friendly rewards and to enable families to have a greater overview of their children's achievements. Of course, at the same time we know that everyone has the occasional lapse in behaviour choices, so we also wanted to make the actions after these more restorative.



We are finalising our new Wellbeing and Behaviour Policy, therefore, to incorporate these ideas and to alert parents when their **child explicitly displays any of our six school values.** The values postcards on a Friday aren't changing – these are the cornerstone of our reward system, but other incentives will be included on top of these.

In short, **the policy is based upon three principles** – **Praise Points** for individuals displaying school's values, **Star Jars** for classes displaying these collectively, and **Restoring Routes** for those who make occasional mistakes in their behaviour choices, to help them reflect and atone for these. The draft policy is being implemented right now and will be sent home once full approval has been given by governors.

Fundraising

Thank you to our families for all the effort that went into our Colour Run recently, especially those who gave sponsorship or who helped out at the event. It was such fun and a great time was had by all in **another superb PTA event**. The proceeds have gone towards the Daily Mile track, improvements to the EYFS outdoor area, new reading books for phase libraries and potential air-conditioning for the classrooms on the south of the building.





Forthcoming fundraising activities focus on supporting local charities, with Harvest food parcels collected for Salford Loaves and Fishes, funds to be raised for Macmillan Cancer Support and Children in Need, and Christmas donations to Save the Children (three days of Christmas jumpers, so you get your money's worth!) and Wood Street Mission (we will tell you more about these after half-term). Thank you for helping us **teach the children the values of empathy, compassion and consideration.**

Curriculum Recognition

We are delighted to announce that Ellenbrook has just been awarded the national **Music Mark** accreditation for the second year running. Added to our long-standing **School Games Sports Mark** and **Science Mark**, it is great to see that our pledge to give pupils a broad and rich curriculum - as well as our excellent progress in English and Maths (see pupil results from July 2026) - is something that is recognised as a strength of provision for the children here.

Committed to Our Community – Ellenbrook's 30th and Much More…

As staff, we take the responsibility of serving Ellenbrook and its children very seriously, and we never lose sight of the fact that this is a community school - your community. You support us and your school so well and so we want to make it even more of a partnership. Of course, there are the **PTA events and 30th Anniversary celebrations, but we wanted to do even more.** We are holding both parents' evenings in person, have increased our 'future-parent' open events and will hold our 'meet the teacher' meetings before the summer in future, not in September.

Open Morning – inviting parents of all age groups to join us in class

In addition, this term we want to invite all families to a drop-in morning, where you can come in and see your child's class in action, and join in some learning activities with them. We will combine this part of our 30th celebrations and raise funds for MacMillan at the same time, by holding a **Coffee, Cake and Community Open Morning on Weds 25th November**. We'd love you to spend an hour in your child's class then relax in the hall with friends and refreshments.



Before this, on Friday 13th November we will be celebrating Children in Need very simply by asking all children to wear their own clothes, **ideally on a Britpop theme as a nod to our 1996 opening**, for which they donate a pound to the charity. Please don't buy anything specially for this day, just be creative (recycle an outfit as it's also Green Week!).

Then, as we enter 2027, there will be **more events to mark our 30th anniversary**, including the unveiling of our 1996 time-capsule, a commemorative art gallery (framed pictures made by the children), visits by former staff (Mr McNulty, our first headteacher, is particularly excited to be returning) and the 1996-themed Ellenfest 2027. **If you have any photos of the school from any point in the last 30 years, please send these in and we will display them.**

Celebrating 30 Years of Ellenbrook CPS

1996/97 to 2026/27

Linking In

There are many skills amongst our parents/carers that could be of great benefit to others. Lynsey Cowley, mum of two pupils here, who runs a travel counselling business (we must thank Lynsey for the huge help she gave in planning the recent parliament trip, we'd recommend her!) is in the process of creating **a Facebook page where Ellenbrook parents can either advertise their businesses or find trusted providers amongst our families** who can help them.



For example, we have childminders and play providers on the list, which could be useful as demand for our after-school club is so high and places are full. We cannot endorse any parents, it is for people's own private use, but we are happy to signpost anybody interested, so please search on Facebook: 'Support Local Businesses – Ellenbrook School Community' (https://www.facebook.com/share/g/14vCcQgDHEa/?mibextid=wwXIfr)

Focus on Food

You may be aware of increased vigilance in schools recently due to the implementation of Benedict's law, which puts a greater focus on the growing number of children with food allergies. As in all schools, our staff are carrying out extra training in this area this term.



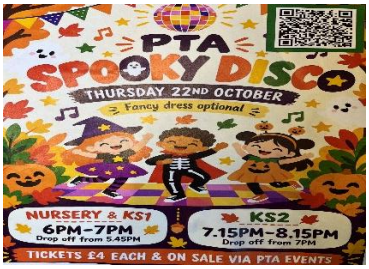
Our school dinners are very carefully regulated for nutrition content and allergen safety, and a new menu comes out after half-term giving a really tasty winter offer. Ellenbrook is lucky to run its own kitchen and team of cooks, from which we can provide such high-quality food, freshly home-made on site.

Birthday sweets - it is so lovely families choose to send food gifts for the class when it is their child's birthday; we are appreciative and wouldn't want to appear negative about this. However, some families are sending in ever-expanding gifts such as party bags for each class member; we would **respectfully ask that you keep it simple** and say if anything it only needs to be a small bag of sweets or similar. Some foods - like chocolate - can mean certain children are left out, so if unsure, it may be better to consider a non-food item, such as **buying one book for the class to share**, which is an idea that is becoming very popular in schools.



Finally on the subject of food, we need to remind some families that **break-time snacks are supposed to be a piece of fruit (modelled perfectly by Nursery!) or bread sticks.** We are seeing an increasing number of bags of processed foods (often family bags or grab-bags), which aren't the best nutrition to support a child through a school morning and result in excessive plastic packaging.

Autumn-Term Dates for Your Diary



22/10/26 – PTA Spooky Disco
23/10/26 – Break up for half-term (return Mon 2nd November)
04/11/26 – Open Evening (for potential future families)
09/11/26 – Green Week (no paper, no elec, etc)
10/11/26 – Open Morning (for potential future families)
13/11/26 – Children in Need – own clothes, Britpop 1996 theme
16&17/11/26 – Parents' Evenings in person
23/11/26 – Autumn Assessment Wk (low-key)
25/11/26 – School Open Morning – Coffee, Cake & Community (for all current families)

27/11/26 – EYFS & KS1 Visiting Pantomime
04&11&18/12/26 – THREE Christmas Jumper (own clothes) Days: every Friday in December
04/12/26 – Santa Dash
11/12/26 – School Christmas Dinner (open to children on packed lunches too)
14/12/26 – Nativity: Nursery - 10am; Y1 - 2pm
15/12/26 – Nativity: Recep'n - 10am; Y2 - 2pm
16/12/26 – Dazzling Darren's Christmas Magic Shows (all classes)
17/12/26 – Class Christmas Parties
18/12/26 – School Carol Service (outside so everyone can join us… weather permitting!)
18/12/26 – Break up at 3.30pm for Christmas Holiday (return on Tuesday 5th Jan, 2026)

