

ULLESTHORPE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

MAPLE CLASS FOCUS

FRIDAY 30TH JANUARY 2026

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UPCOMING DATES

**Parents/Carers of Year 6
SATs Information Evening:**
Thursday 5th Feb 5:15pm

Come as You Are Day:
Friday 6th February

**Children's Mental Health
Week:**
9th-15th February

**Key Stage 2 Maths
Information Meeting:**
Thursday 12th February

HEAD OF SCHOOL

MRS J. ALLEN

A belated Happy New Year 2026!

Here at Ullesthorpe CE Primary School, we have made a great start to the new calendar year by re-focusing on our school vision statement: 'Learn together, Grow together, Shine forever'.

The Christian value in focus for this half term is 'Friendship' and we are delighted by seeing this value in action: through the caring and helpful choices that our children make every day. In our Friday worship assemblies we have enjoyed celebrating the many different ways in which our community are shining their light.

In this newsletter, we celebrate the superb learning experiences that have been enjoyed by Maple Class lately; read on to find out more.

We are also proud and happy to send our congratulations to the latest Ullesthorpe School 'stars-of-the-week' who have been showing their very best S.T.A.R listening and shining the light of their good choices and achievements: Oliver, Mimi, Arlo, Jonathan, Ewan, Evelyn, Evelyn and Mia. Very well done to them all!

Please do feel free to come and speak with me at the school gates, or make an appointment through the school office.

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ANTI-BULLYING

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We know that the word bullying can be worrying, and it is sometimes used to describe an experience of unkindness that a child has had. While all unkind behaviour is taken seriously, bullying is a very specific term with a particular meaning. The Anti-Bullying Alliance defines bullying as:

“The **repetitive, intentional hurting** of one person or group by another person or group, **where the relationship involves an imbalance of power**. Bullying can be **physical, verbal or psychological**. It can happen **face-to-face or online**.”

This means that for behaviour to be considered bullying, it must be deliberate, repeated over time, and involve an imbalance of power – for example, an older child towards a younger child, a group targeting an individual, or someone using their status or strength to hurt another.

Sometimes, **children may experience one-off incidents, friendship fallouts, or unkind words that are upsetting but do not meet the definition of bullying**.

These situations are still important and are always followed up, but they are different from bullying. It is also important to recognise that **some children have social or communication difficulties which can make friendships more challenging**. For example:

- Some children, including those with autism or similar needs, may speak without a social “filter” and say things that come across as unkind, without intending to upset anyone.
- Some children may struggle to understand how to join in games and might appear to be following another child, when in fact they are trying to make friends or be included.

Our role as a school is to support all children – both those who may be upset and those who may need help developing social skills. **We support our children to build positive friendships, improve communication, and learn how to interact kindly and respectfully with others**. As always, please talk to us if you have concerns. Working together helps us support children in the best possible way.

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Maple Class have been working incredibly hard after our return to school following the winter break.

As part of our art lessons, the children have been learning about print making - using potatoes and fabric to design and create their own printwork. A few messy hands, but big smiles during this lesson!

In Science, the children have been exploring various materials and the properties that each material has. Most recently, they took on the role of product designers, deciding which properties best suited a product and the material that would be best suited to match their properties.

The children have been working as historians during our writing lessons, recording their knowledge of the Great Fire of London in their non-chron reports. What fantastic young writers we have in our class and such wonderful handwriting - something the children have been working very hard on.

In music, the children have been learning about body percussion and exploring different songs using body percussion. Most recently, they worked in groups to compose their own body percussion songs. They then performed their pieces of music to the rest of the class.



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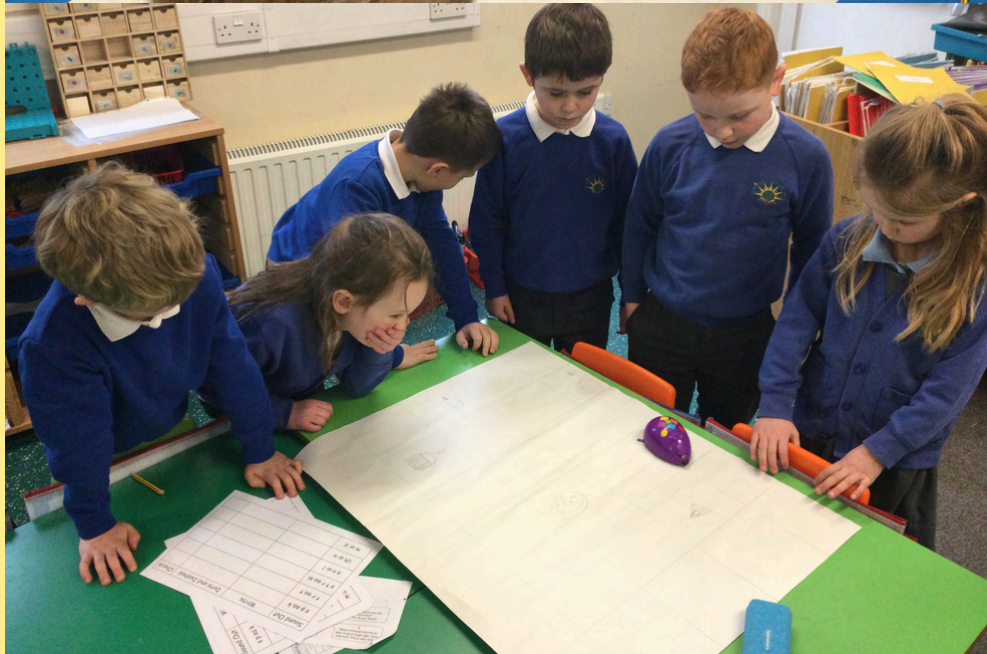
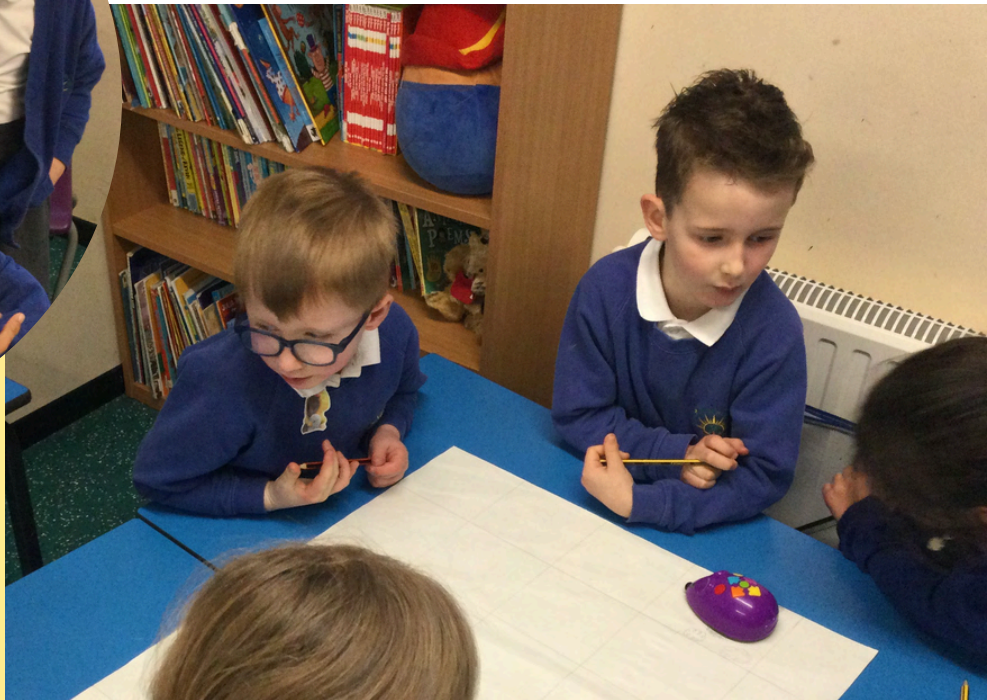
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CREATIVE COMPUTING



We have been learning how to become expert robot programmers, looking at how buttons can be used to programme a robot and give it directions to follow.

The children created their own maps and plotted the routes that they wanted their robot mice to take. If their robot took a wrong turn, we discussed how they had a bug in their programme and they needed to reprogram their robot to fix their bug.



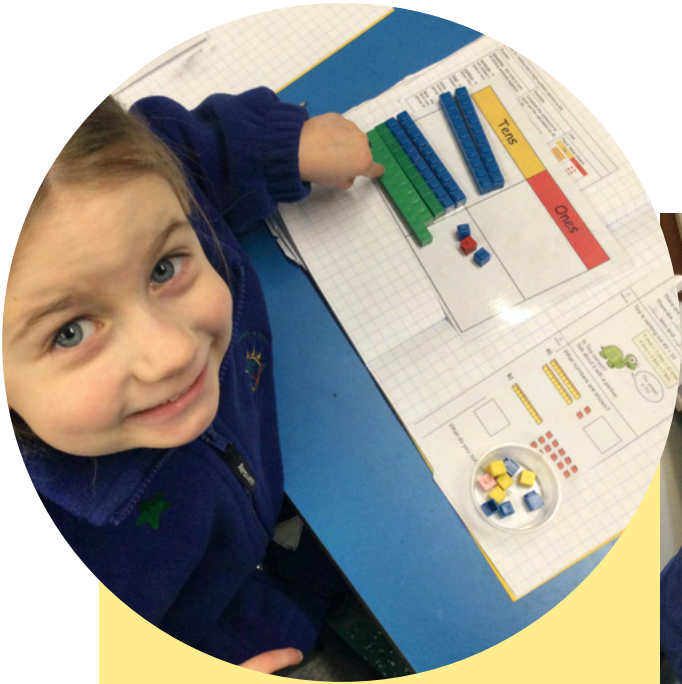
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MARVELLOUS MATHS



In our maths lessons, the children have been focusing on extending their addition and subtraction knowledge.

The children have been using their Place Value Charts to help add two 2 digit numbers together using our Base 10 equipment.

Mr Gray



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ECO COMMITTEE

The Eco Committee meets regularly with Mrs Hartley to look at ways in which we can all 'look out' to help the wider natural environment and be caretakers of our precious planet.

You may catch sight of members collecting tea bags for composting, or litter picking the school grounds, or even planting trees on occasion!

What is **courageous advocacy**?

Courageous advocacy is defined by the Church of England as **"the act of speaking out against an issue of injustice, often on behalf of those whose voice is not heard."**

Here at Ullesthorpe CE Primary School we encourage and support our children to become courageous advocates who believe that they can be the 'agents of change' to strive towards a fairer, more peaceful, ecologically protected and joyful world.

This means that we will support our children in championing causes that are special and meaningful to them; whether connected to concerns that are close to home or personal to them, or concerns linked to wider global issues.

We have just recently joined SuperKind - an active citizenship and social action platform - to further develop this work to empower our children as courageous advocates for their communities, local and global.

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**MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.**

ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CHECK-IN

**SUPERBLY WELL DONE TO THOSE YEAR GROUPS
WITH 100% ATTENDANCE!**

Class:	Last Week %	This Week %
Willow	96	97
Maple	95	94
Birch	97	99
Oak	99	97
Year Group:		
EYFS	100	97
Year 1	89	92
Year 2	99	96
Year 3	97	100
Year 4	97	97
Year 5	99	97
Year 6	99	97

School Overall % (this Year):

95.2%

National Average:

94.6%

What Parents & Educators Need to Know about POKÉMON TCG POCKET



WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

Pokémon TCG Pocket is a mobile version of the hugely popular Pokémon Trading Card Game, downloaded over 100 million times on Android and iOS. Players collect cards, battle others online, and open packs of cards – known as booster packs – to expand their decks. While the core game can be fun and helps develop tactical and numeracy skills, its design encourages spending and can feed addictive behaviours – making it important for adults to understand the risks.

ADDICTIVE PACK OPENING



Booster packs rely on probability to provide rare or powerful cards. The excitement of opening them – and the dopamine rush when finding a sought-after card – can become addictive. Unlike purely cosmetic loot boxes, the cards here are integral to competitive gameplay, adding extra pressure for serious gamers to collect more.

QUICK BUT ABSORBING

Card battles last around five to six minutes, making it easy to fit in “just one more game”. This quick format, combined with the drive to win, can lead to prolonged play sessions and increased screen time without noticing. With limited-time Ranked Match seasons constantly being refreshed – an opportunity to accumulate points and earn profile emblems – players may find themselves drawn into this game mechanic repeatedly.

PREMIUM PASS PRESSURE

A monthly subscription gives players access to exclusive missions, rewards, and an extra daily booster pack. Missions and rewards are replaced each month, providing an incentive to stay subscribed. While some premium rewards are exclusive, others are available through free play – making the pass more about faster progression and obtaining cosmetic items than true necessity.

ENDLESS PACK LOOPS

New themed sets of cards are released each month, ranging from around 85 to over 370 cards per expansion. This constant cycle encourages players to keep opening packs in an effort to complete collections or improve their battle decks, potentially promoting unhealthy spending habits. With the introduction of limited-time booster packs, some players may feel increased pressure to collect these cards while they're still available.

COST OF BOOSTER PACKS

Although free to play, with set rewards and two free booster packs given daily, players can exchange Poké Gold if they wish to open more, and a small amount of Poké Gold is rewarded for free as the player levels up. Poké Gold is also sold in bundles that are often just short of what players need to open extra packs, encouraging them to buy additional bundles.

COMPETITIVE ONLINE PLAY

Interactions in Pokémon TCG Pocket are relatively safe – there's no messaging between players, friend requests require player approval, no real names are used, and card trading is restricted to fair trades between friends. On the other hand, the competitive nature of online play can still cause frustration, over-investment, and isolation if children spend too much time focused on the game.

Advice for Parents & Educators

MONITOR SPENDING HABITS

Set clear boundaries around in-game purchases. Treat Poké Gold as an occasional rather than routine reward, helping children develop healthier attitudes towards digital spend.



SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

Talk about the unpredictable nature of booster packs and prepare children for disappointment when duplicates appear or rare cards don't surface. Understanding probability can help minimise disappointment – use the game's built-in offering rates guides to find out more about it.



PLAY TOGETHER

Card battles can help children learn tactics, problem-solving, and rule-following, as well as numeracy skills. Playing alongside them is a great way to share in their enjoyment, while also modelling balanced play and keeping an eye on how much they're investing in the game.



TEACH FAIRNESS

Losing a battle can be discouraging, especially when money has been spent on collecting the cards to build a deck. Support children in recognising the importance of fairness, learning from both wins and losses, and making considered choices when trading cards.



Meet Our Expert

Dan Lipscombe is a videogame journalist and children's book author with over 15 years of experience. Specialising in technology and gaming, he has written extensively on how digital platforms affect young people and has been playing games for more than three decades.

