

## Head Talk

Welcome to this week's newsletter, the first since coming back after the half term break. Last week the government announced its intentions in the schools white paper: SEND Reform: Putting Children and Young People First. Mrs Arnold, the school SENCo, has provided a summary of the document a little later in this newsletter. The changes are far reaching and I am pleased to say that Hamilton Primary School has been working hard on its processes over the past year to make sure that they align well with the document.

Last week the Year 3 children had a great time presenting all of their learning to parents/carers in an assembly on Friday. The children had covered a great deal of ground since September and they very much enjoyed sharing this with everyone.

In the coming weeks we will be inviting parents/carers into the school to celebrate children's learning via the Learning Conferences. These will take place on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March and Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March. Bookings were made over the half term. If you missed your opportunity, please email the [parents@hamilton.essex.sch.uk](mailto:parents@hamilton.essex.sch.uk) email address to let the team know, so that they can book you in as the booking system is now closed.

I am also very excited to say that this week, Monty, the Therapy Dog joined us for an hour. He worked with 7 pupils across the school to support them with their well-being. Monty, and his owner Mark, will be joining us for an hour each week to support children in the school. This is a massive thanks to [Essex Therapy Dogs](#), who have agreed for this to happen. I thought I would add a picture of Monty for you all too!



As always, Mr Greatorex and I are available at the school gates in the morning or on the playground in the afternoons to have a chat with. Please pop over to say hello.

Have a good couple of weeks.

## E-Safety Nugget

This week's focus is on the use of Mobile phones. Hamilton Primary School is a mobile phone free school. Children who have phones are expected to hand them in to class teachers at the beginning of every day and the phones are returned at the end of the school day. The government released guidance for schools last month, which comes into effect from April. [You can find the guidance here.](#) I am pleased to say that I have worked with some parents/carers in the school community last week to look at our school's draft policy for the use of mobile phones and this policy will be presented to governors this month for ratification. If you would like some useful advice on how to manage a phone with your child, you might find the following site useful:

<https://www.smartphonefreechildhood.org/>

## Attendance

At this time of year children often have colds and runny noses and feel generally under the weather. School attendance is still vital for children as any missed time means missed learning and catching



up for your child. The NHS has a document that supports parents/carers in deciding if their child is too ill to go to school. The link to this is here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

Our Attendance Policy can be found on the school website:

<https://www.hamiltonprimary.com/office/policies>

Our current attendance is 96.9%. I want this number to be 97% or higher. We have had a number of children who have been unwell and some families have taken holidays too. If your child has below 90% attendance, they will be classed as being persistently absent. This is not good. It means your child is missing too much education. Please ensure your child attends school. If we have concerns about your child's attendance, we will be writing to you and offering you a meeting to discuss any support that you may need. Please help us to help your child. Our leading attending year group is Year 4 with 97.8% attendance. Keep up the excellent work.

## SEND Spotlight

Essex County Council are running a SEND roadshow at Colchester Football Ground on 25<sup>th</sup> March between 9.30am and 12.30pm. This is a drop-in service and many agencies will be there for you to talk with. For further details, please click the link below:

<https://send.essex.gov.uk/local-offer-roadshow-north-east-essex>

## SEND FEST

SEND FEST is a fun festival exclusively for children and young people with SEND and their families.

There will be a magical after-hours evening at Colchester Zoo.

Please see the flyer attached for more information. Tickets are now available at:

<https://SENFESTZoo.eventbrite.co.uk>

## Spotlight on SEND – The SEND White Paper

The SEND White Paper was released last week and there has been much conversation in the press and media about it. Current practice continues to support children in line with the SEND Code of Practice while the 12 week consultation period is in place. If you would like to read the full report the link is:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69972c02bfdab2546272c007/Every\\_child\\_achieving\\_and\\_thriving\\_print\\_ready\\_version.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69972c02bfdab2546272c007/Every_child_achieving_and_thriving_print_ready_version.pdf)

I thought it would be useful to compare the key points in the White Paper with how we are currently supporting children with SEND at Hamilton Primary School. This is attached separately. If you have any questions or comments you would like to make, please come to the SEND Forum next term to join in the conversation.

## The Great Big School Clean is back!

Join the nation's biggest mass action campaign, which takes place from 13<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> March 2026.

At Hamilton we have pledged to reduce litter in our local area and we need your help! If you are able to conduct your own litter pick of an area in Colchester of your choice, we can loan you some equipment to help. Please email the office to request a litter picker, collect and sign for it from Miss Clow on a Friday after school (KS2 playground) then email us a phot of you and your child litter picking, for them to receive a certificate! We will add the number of bags you pick to our school pledge. Let's see how much of Colchester we can clean up this March!

(All litter picking is done at your own risk.)

## Year 1 Assembly

Year 1 would like to invite their parents/carers to their assembly on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2026 at 9.30am.

## Mayor's Chess Tournament

On Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> February, Hamilton sent a team from the chess club to take part in the Mayor's tournament at the Town Hall. The children put their intellect and concentration skills to the test, each playing six games in an engrossing tournament set amongst the grandeur of the Moot Hall.

The games were played in a sporting yet competitive atmosphere with each one contributing to both an individual and a team total, as the schools from the area competed to be Colchester's best.

After over two hours of play, the tournament was set for a grandstand finish, with Hamilton's Gabriel Kua, up against the only other child to have won all their first five games, in a winner takes all match! The result... stalemate: joint individual winners of the tournament. Has chess ever been so exciting!

Winners of the team trophy: Hamilton Primary School!



## Rotary Young Writer

Congratulations to Muhammad (Sameer) Khan in Year 2SN who won the local round of the Rotary Young Writers competition.



## Year 4 Football Tournament

On Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> February, the Year 4 football team took part in a tournament at Shrub End. For much of the tournament, the team battled hard for very little reward. However, they kept showing resilience and determination throughout, refusing to give in. The turning point for them came when, losing by several goals to a very good team, the Hamilton children made three excellent tackles in a row. They celebrated their wonderful defending like they had scored a goal and kept that team spirit going into the last game. They then finally got the win they greatly deserved, with a brace of goals from Roo Whittaker sealing a 2:0 victory. There was wonderful support from parents and carers throughout, and the team left the tournament still celebrating that final victory.



## Year 4 Squash Tournament

On Thursday, Hamilton sent two teams of Year 4 children to the Roman Cup squash tournament at the Corporal Budd gymnasium. This was the first time the Hamilton children had played on a full-size squash court and they rose to the challenge wonderfully. The tournament sees teams of two girls and two boys competing in games where every point counts towards the team total. The Hamilton teams performed admirably, with every child winning points for their team and cheering each other on. A big thank you to the parents who played an important role organising, supervising and cheering on the children. It helped create a memorable event for everyone involved. The teams will be back in two weeks' time for the finals.

## Languages @ Hamilton

Building a bilingual brain is a true superpower! Being able to switch between two languages is more than just a handy trick—it's a constant "brain workout" that strengthens **focus**, **problem-solving**, and **empathy**.

Whether our children are fluent at home or just starting their journey in class, they are developing a vital skill that builds bridges between cultures and opens doors to a global future.

## Share Your Language With Us!

We want to celebrate the diverse voices in our school community. If you speak a language other than English at home, we would love for you to get involved:

- **Help with Vocabulary:** Help us create multilingual "welcome" signs or translate key classroom words.
- **Share Your Culture:** Join us for upcoming cultural events to share traditional music, stories, or food. (More details to follow in the coming weeks)

Please **contact the school office** if you're interested in sharing your "superpower" with our children!



In Spanish:

Idiomas en Hamilton

¡Desarrollar un cerebro bilingüe es un verdadero superpoder! Poder alternar entre dos idiomas es más que un simple truco práctico: es un ejercicio mental constante que fortalece la concentración, la resolución de problemas y la empatía. Ya sea que nuestros estudiantes hablen con fluidez en casa o estén comenzando su aprendizaje en clase, están desarrollando una habilidad vital que construye puentes entre culturas y abre puertas a un futuro global. ¡Comparte tu idioma con nosotros! Queremos celebrar la diversidad de voces en nuestra comunidad escolar. Si hablas un idioma diferente al inglés en casa, nos encantaría que participaras:

Ayuda con el vocabulario: Ayúdanos a crear letreros de bienvenida multilingües o a traducir palabras clave del aula.

Comparte tu cultura: Únete a nuestros próximos eventos culturales para compartir música, historias o gastronomía tradicional. (Pronto habrá más detalles).

¡Comunícate con la secretaria si te interesa compartir tu "superpoder" con nuestros estudiantes!

In Chinese:

语言@汉密尔顿

培养双语能力是一项真正的超能力！能够在两种语言之间切换不仅仅是一项实用技巧，更是一种持续的“大脑锻炼”，能够增强专注力、解决问题的能力 and 同理心。

无论我们的学生在家是否能流利使用双语，或者刚刚开始在课堂上学习，他们都在培养一项至关重要的技能，这项技能能够搭建文化间的桥梁，并开启通往全球化未来的大门。

与我们分享您的语言！

我们希望庆祝学校社区中多元化的声音。如果您在家说英语以外的语言，我们非常欢迎您参与其中：

协助词汇学习：帮助我们制作多语种“欢迎”标语或翻译课堂上的关键词汇。

分享您的文化：欢迎参加我们即将举办的文化活动，分享传统音乐、故事或美食。（更多详情将在未来几周内公布）

如果您有兴趣与我们的学生分享您的“超能力”，请联系学校办公室！



## Calendar Dates

Spring Term 2026	
Monday 16 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Year 5 – Viking Workshop Day
Tuesday 17 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Learning Conference – No Clubs or Hub <b>AFTER</b> school
Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Learning Conference – No Clubs or Hub <b>AFTER</b> school
Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Year 5 Play to Parents - Afternoon performance – time to be confirmed
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Year 1 Assembly to Parents - 9.30am start
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> March 2026	Non-Pupil Day
Monday 30 <sup>th</sup> March to Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> April 2026	Easter Holidays

Summer Term 2026	
Monday 13 <sup>th</sup> April 2026	First Day of Term
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2026	Cultural Heritage Day
Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2026	Year 3 Play to Parent's - Time to be confirmed
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> May 2026	Class Photos - Van Cols
Monday 25 <sup>th</sup> May to Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> May 2026	Half Term
Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2026	Non-Pupil Day
Monday 20 <sup>th</sup> July 2026	Non-Pupil Day
Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup> July to Friday 31 <sup>st</sup> August 2026	Summer Holidays

Autumn Term 2026	
Tuesday 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2026	Non-Pupil Day
Wednesday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September 2026	First Day of Term

## Email Information

If contacting the school via email, please use:

[parents@hamilton.essex.sch.uk](mailto:parents@hamilton.essex.sch.uk)