Issue No. 15

RIDGEWAY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

October 2026

EXECUTIVE HEAD'S UPDATE

A Busy and Brilliant Start to the Year!

Dear Parents and Carers,

What a busy and exciting first half term we've had at Ridgeway School! Our pupils and students have been busy settling back into school and making the most of the fantastic improvements completed over the summer holidays.

From our new classrooms and improved outdoor spaces to the accessible pathway connecting us to Forest School and our new Eco Garden, there has been plenty to explore and enjoy. We are particularly pleased to see our newly refurbished Aspens Block providing a dedicated home for our Sixth Form students, with fantastic new learning, social and Preparing for Adulthood spaces.

Other improvements include a new raised pond and planting in our Eco Area, refreshed hydro pool changing facilities and transformed outdoor spaces across the school. It has been wonderful to see our pupils and students enjoying these new facilities and making the most of the opportunities they provide.

As we look ahead to the rest of the year, we are excited to build on this positive start, supporting every pupil and student to learn, grow and achieve in an environment where they feel happy, safe and ready to thrive.

We hope you enjoy reading about what's been happening across Ridgeway in this edition of our newsletter!

Best wishes,
Joe



Where does the NEW path lead?.....







New pathway from the school, access control gate, fence and secure outside space





Pupil kitchen and life skills suite

Removed central island to allow wheelchair access, flooring repaired, height adjustable work surface, new fridge freezer, air fryer, microwave, washing machine, kettle and dryer.

New accessible wet room

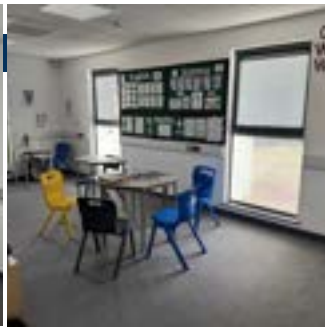
New spacious changing / toilet / wet room created. Hoist and extra large changing bed.







Aspens

Before



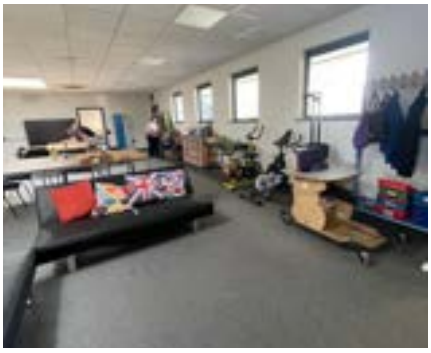

After

Classrooms

Designated classroom space with air con!!!!



Before




After

Common Space

Open space for students to relax, socialise and eat their lunches.



Back view

Main entrance door, all access controlled, large sheltered sitting area and secure open space with grass and hard standing.

We are very proud to have this fantastic new facility for our Sixth Form provision and look forward to seeing how it develops over the coming years as staff and students settle into their new surroundings and make the space their own.

We would like to thank Bedford Borough Council for their support in helping to create such a valuable space for our students.

Other Changes Across the Site.....



One of three **refurbished** toilet and changing areas in Primary



Our **NEW** Eco Garden complete with raised pond



NEW pathway from the playground to Forest School







NEW Early Years Playground. Safety surface with fun colourful designs and lots of different equipment to support physcial, mental and sensory needs





Hydro Pool Changing rooms and entrance area were **refurbished** with White Rock on all the walls. Creating a light easy to clean space.

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Our New Forest School Pathway Is Officially Open!

We were delighted to officially open our new Forest School pathway this week, made possible thanks to the incredibly generous donation from Mike.

Mike joined us alongside his guests and members of our Governing Body for a special ribbon-cutting ceremony. It was wonderful to see so many of our pupils able to access the whole route down the field to Forest School, making our outdoor learning area more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

Forest School was looking fantastic, with its different activity stations and brand-new signs, ready for our pupils to explore and enjoy.

A huge thank you to Mike for his generosity, to Joe, Sam and Vince for their work getting Forest School ready, and to all the staff and pupils who came down to welcome Mike and his guests and help make the visit so special.










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PICA: *Understanding & Supporting Your Child*

What is PICA?

PICA is when a child repeatedly eats or mouths things that are not food. Some children may seek certain textures, tastes or sensory experiences and may not always recognise that an item is unsafe to eat.

This might include:

- Stones
- Paper or card
- Leaves, grass or soil
- Crayons or chalk
- Small objects
- Hair

Why Might It Happen?

Children may engage in PICA for different reasons. The reasons can vary from child to child.

- Sensory-seeking needs
- Anxiety or emotional regulation
- Enjoyment of specific textures or tastes
- Learning disabilities or autism
- Nutritional deficiencies (such as iron deficiency)

Why Is PICA a Concern?

Eating non-food items can sometimes lead to:

This is why identifying PICA early & working together is so important.

- Choking
- Illness or infection
- Stomach pain or blockages
- Poisoning
- Dental damage

How Can Parents Help? *At Home:*

Keep high-risk items out of reach where possible.

Supervise closely during activities involving small objects.

Praise safe choices and positive behaviour.

Note when the behaviour happens:

- What was happening beforehand?
- What item was chosen?
- How did your child respond afterwards?

Helpful Alternatives

Some children benefit from safe sensory alternatives such as:

Talk to school if you'd like advice about appropriate alternatives.

- Chewable sensory aids
- Crunchy snacks
- Sensory play activities
- Fidget toys and sensory resources

Home & School Partnership

The most effective support happens when school and home work together.

By sharing information about: *Triggers* *Patterns* *Successful strategies*

We can develop a consistent approach that helps keep your child safe and supported.

Concerned About Your Child?

Please speak to a member of staff if you have any concerns about your child eating or mouthing non-food items.

Together we can support children to be safe, healthy and successful.

RIDGEWAY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Lulu Stanier-Martin
Head of School & DSL Lead

HEAD of SCHOOL MESSAGE



Supporting Your Child at Home

Online safety plays an important part in the lives of our pupils and students. Technology can help children communicate, learn, explore their interests and become more independent. However, online spaces can also feel confusing or overwhelming, particularly for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

At school, we teach online safety in clear, relevant and meaningful ways. We revisit key messages regularly and help pupils understand them through practical examples, visual prompts and supportive conversations. By working together, families and school can help children build confidence, make safer choices and know when to ask a trusted adult for help.

Simple Ways to Support Online Safety

Every child is different, so online-safety support should be adapted to their communication, understanding and level of independence. Helpful steps may include:

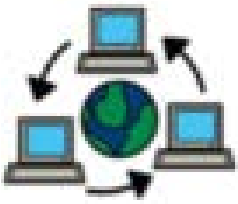
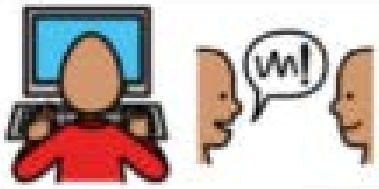
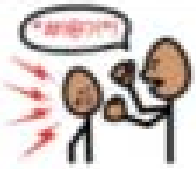
- Agree clear, consistent rules about when, where and how devices can be used.
- Use simple language, visual reminders or social stories to explain online risks and safe choices.
- Explore games, apps and websites together so you understand what your child enjoys and who they may interact with.
- Check privacy, communication and parental-control settings regularly, especially after updates or when a new app is installed.
- Encourage your child to pause and check with a trusted adult before sharing personal information, photographs or their location.
- Reassure your child that they can tell you if something online worries, confuses or upsets them, and that they will not be blamed for asking for help.
- Build in regular screen breaks and support a healthy balance between online and offline activities.

Useful Online-Safety Resources

The following websites offer further guidance for parents and carers, including advice on device settings, reporting concerns, age-appropriate conversations and SEND-specific support:

- saferinternet.org.uk – this site has resources about how to set up different devices safely
- reportharmfulcontent.com – this is where you can report concerns or harmful content
- internetmatters.org– Internet Matters has expert advice on all areas of online safety, including some SEND-specific guidance. Just type SEND in their search box.
- thinkuknow.co.uk – this is run by CEOP and has helpful advice on preventative measures, or handling a concern. They have some fun and interactive internet safety games too.
- childnet.com – Childnet has lots of online safety guides for parents and carers.
- parentsprotect.co.uk – this website is specifically around preventing sexual abuse and exploitation, with lots of focus on internet safety.
- safety.google– Google's Family Safety Centre helps you to set boundaries and use technology safely.
- www.bbc.com – Own It! is a fun website for children to use and has lots of parent-specific guidance videos.
- iwf.org.uk– you can use the IWF to report any content concerns connected to child sexual abuse

Online Safety at Ridgeway

	Online safety means keeping you safe and happy when you use the internet.
	There are lots of brilliant things about using the internet, like playing games, finding information and talking to friends.
	We might see things online that we don't like, or might be illegal. We must tell someone if this happens.
	People online might say mean things, or try to make us do things that aren't safe. We must tell someone if this happens.
	We need to know what information about ourselves we should or shouldn't share online.
	Some information online is 'fake news', or is a scam. We need to understand what this means.
	We have to take care of the technology that we use.
	At school and college, adults have to make sure that everyone is using the internet safely.

RIDGEWAY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Ruby Class Forest School Fun

RUBY

What a fantastic start to the school year for Ruby Class! We have all spent time getting to know our new school environment or settling back into familiar routines. It has been wonderful to see pupils growing in confidence, building relationships, and engaging so positively in school life.

We have loved exploring our continuous provision areas and developing our attention and engagement during adult-led activities. Forest School has been a particular highlight this half term. Although the weather has often been rainy, the children have embraced the outdoor environment and enjoyed a wide range of sensory and exploratory experiences.











Forest School

RIDGEWAY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Meet the.....
Communication Support Team



Phemie Innes
Speech & Language Therapist



April Warman
Communication Support Worker

We know how important communication is for pupils' learning and development, which is why it's a key part of everything we do at Ridgeway!

Our team works closely with classes to ensure that speech and language support is embedded throughout the entire day, across all activities and within the whole school environment.

October is AAC Awareness Month!

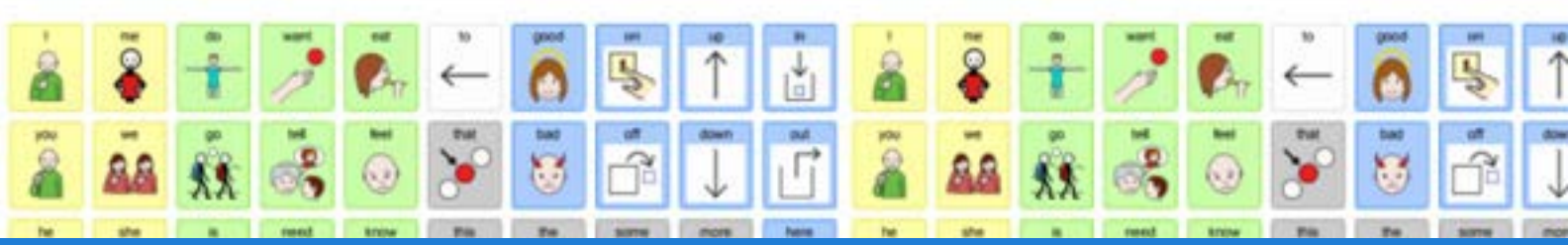
An opportunity to celebrate and promote the many ways our pupils communicate.

AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) refers to the tools, strategies and systems that support communication for those who have difficulty using spoken language.

This can include gestures, body language, speech, signs, symbols, communication boards/books, electronic devices, facial expression and more!

Whether using AAC to express needs, share feelings, ask questions, make comments or draw attention to something important, every form of communication is meaningful and valued.

By recognising and valuing all ways of communicating, we help create an environment where every pupil has a voice and every voice is heard.



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Phemie & April

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Upper 6th Form

Coming soon.....to an Enterprise shop/market stall near you









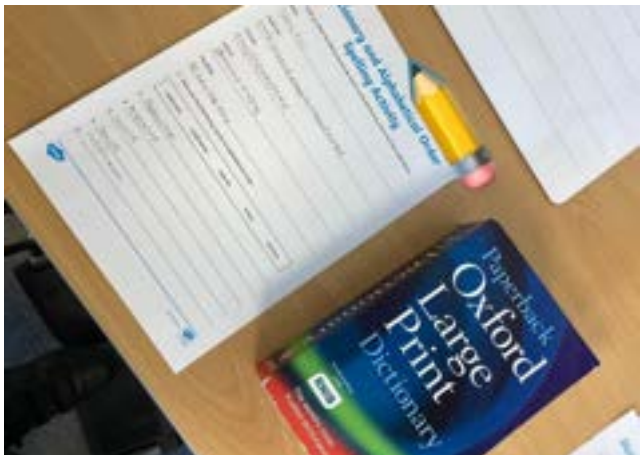

Exciting new projects and developments happening with the UP16 team learning new skills to keep our products fresh and new.

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Upper 6th Form



What's Your Favourite Word?



Our pupils have been putting their dictionary skills to the test!



From challenging each other to recognise interesting and unusual words, to checking spellings and definitions, and putting words into alphabetical order, there's been plenty of word-based fun.

Challenge of the day: What's the fanciest word you can use in a conversation today? Can you impress someone with your vocabulary?

SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS

Is supercalifragilisticexpialidocious an actual word?

Yes, supercalifragilisticexpialidocious is an actual, recognised word that appears in major dictionaries like the Oxford English Dictionary

Definition: It is an adjective, that means "fabulous," "wonderful," or an expression of excited approval.

Origin: While it started as a children's nonsense word, or double-talk in the 1930s, it was popularised globally by the 1964 Disney film, Mary Poppins.

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Learning In and Out of the Classroom

Maths: Creating tally charts to record the different coloured cars in the CDC car park & along Hill Rise, bringing maths to life in a real-world setting.



Travel Training: Enjoying group walks to the local bus stops, building confidence and developing important independent travel skills.





Jeans for Genes: Taking part in Jeans for Genes Day to raise money and awareness for people living with genetic conditions.



PSHE: Discussing our class expectations and responsibilities as we start the new school year, helping everyone understand how we can work together.

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Enrichment Clubs Are Coming!

Starting after half term, our pupils will have the opportunity to take part in Friday afternoon enrichment clubs! There will be lots of exciting activities to explore, new skills to learn and fun to be had with friends.

What's on offer?

KS1

- Music
- Gardening

KS2

- Construction
- Drama
- Movement and Games

KS3/4

- Cookery
- Art
- Forest School
- Board Games
- Dance
- Music

6th Form

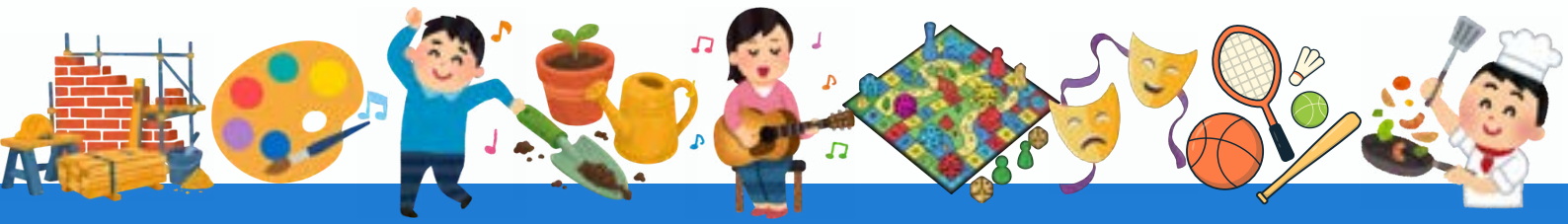
- ⚽ Sports
- Dance
- Board Games
- Cooking

The fun doesn't stop there! Pupils can also enjoy our lunchtime clubs:

Lunchtime Clubs

- Primary Parachute Club! (Disclaimer, NOT actual parachuting)
- Secondary Scooter Club with Keisha

We're really looking forward to seeing our pupils get involved, try something new, discover their interests and enjoy even more opportunities to learn and have fun together.



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PE



TABLE CRICKET FUN!

Purple, Silver and Blue Classes have been enjoying learning to play Table Cricket, with specialist coaches joining us for a five-week coaching programme!

The pupils are having a fantastic time developing their skills, practising their shots and learning how to play as a team. It's been wonderful to see their enthusiasm grow and how much progress they are making already.

Well done to everyone involved – we can't wait to see what you achieve over the next few weeks!

Keisha










RIDGEWAY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

PUPILS TAKE SECOND PLACE IN INTER-SCHOOL BOCCIA TOURNAMENT!

A huge well done to pupils in Silver and Teal Class who took part in an inter-school Boccia tournament last week!

Our team did amazingly well, showing fantastic teamwork, determination and sporting spirit throughout the competition. We are incredibly proud to share that they came second place!











Well done to everyone who took part and represented our school so brilliantly. What a fantastic achievement!

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What a fantastic start to the school year Coral Class has had! The children have settled really well into their new classroom environment and have shown enthusiasm, curiosity and a positive attitude towards their learning.

CORAL Class

This half term, we have enjoyed getting to know one another and building strong relationships. The children have worked hard across all areas of the curriculum and most importantly had lots of fun!













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Enjoy the half term break and I look forward to welcoming the children back to school after a well earnt rest

Stacey

RIDGEWAY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



Ridgeway has an RSA, akin to a PTA, consisting of a small group of parents aiming to organize and host fundraising events next year for a new sensory and memorial garden for the children.

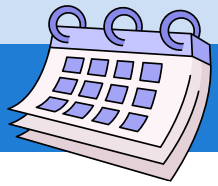
We would love to hear from you if you're interested in getting involved!

Join us on the Ridgeway School RSA Facebook page, where you can connect with us and stay updated on our latest news.

If you receive any unwanted gifts this Christmas, please consider donating them to the school as raffle prizes for next year's fundraising initiatives.



RIDGEWAY SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



2026 / 2027 Term Dates



Dates for your diary.....

23rd October Last Day

2nd November All Pupils return to school

Ridgeway School Term Dates 2026 / 2027

School Holiday | Bank Holiday | Pupil Day | Training Day

	September 2026					
Mon		7	14	21		
Tue	1	8	15		29	
Wed	2	9		23	30	
Thu	3		17			
Fri	4	11	18	25		
Sat	5	12	19	26		
Sun	6	13	20	27		

	October 2026					
Mon		5	12		26	
Tue				20	27	
Wed		7		21	28	
Thu	1			22	29	
Fri		9	16		30	
Sat	3	10	17	24	31	
Sun	4	11	18	25		

	November 2026					
Mon		2	9	16	23	30
Tue		3	10	17	24	
Wed		4	11	18	25	
Thu		5	12	19	26	
Fri		6	13	20	27	
Sat		7	14	21	28	
Sun	1	8	15	22	29	

	December 2026					
Mon		7	14	21	28	
Tue	1	8	15	22	29	
Wed	2	9	16	23	30	
Thu	3	10	17	24	31	
Fri	4	11	18	25		
Sat	5	12	19	26		
Sun	6	13	20	27		

	January 2027					
Mon		4	11	18	25	
Tue		5	12	19	26	
Wed		6	13	20	27	
Thu		7	14	21	28	
Fri	1	8	15	22	29	
Sat	2	9	16	23	30	
Sun	3	10	17	24	31	

	February 2027					
Mon	1	8	15	22		
Tue	2	9	16	23		
Wed	3	10	17	24		
Thu	4	11	18	25		
Fri	5	12	19	26		
Sat	6	13	20	27		
Sun	7	14	21	28		

	March 2027					
Mon	1	8	15	22	29	
Tue	2	9	16	23	30	
Wed	3	10	17	24	31	
Thu	4	11	18	25		
Fri	5	12	19	26		
Sat	6	13	20	27		
Sun	7	14	21	28		

	April 2027					
Mon		5	12	19	26	
Tue		6	13	20	27	
Wed		7	14	21	28	
Thu	1	8	15	22	29	
Fri	2	9	16	23	30	
Sat	3	10	17	24		
Sun	4	11	18	25		

	May 2027					
Mon		3	10	17	24	31
Tue		4	11	18	25	
Wed		5	12	19	26	
Thu		6	13	20	27	
Fri		7	14	21	28	
Sat	1	8	15	22	29	
Sun	2	9	16	23	30	

	June 2027					
Mon		7	14	21	28	
Tue	1	8	15	22	29	
Wed	2	9	16	23	30	
Thu	3	10	17	24		
Fri	4	11	18	25		
Sat	5	12	19	26		
Sun	6	13	20	27		

	July 2027					
Mon		5	12	19	26	
Tue		6	13	20	27	
Wed		7	14	21	28	
Thu	1	8	15	22	29	
Fri	2	9	16	23	30	
Sat	3	10	17	24	31	
Sun	4	11	18	25		

	August 2027					
Mon		2	9	16	23	30
Tue		3	10	17	24	31
Wed		4	11	18	25	
Thu		5	12	19	26	
Fri		6	13	20	27	
Sat		7	14	21	28	
Sun	1	8	15	22	29	

Autumn Term – 74 Days | Spring Term – 54 Days | Summer Term – 67 Days | TOTAL Number OF DAYS 195

Pupil contact will amount to 190 of the 195 days. Schools will be closed on five of the 195 days to enable teacher training to take place in accordance with teachers' Conditions of Service. The law requires that a parent ensures that their child receives a full and efficient education. If you enrol your child at a school, then you must ensure that they attend regularly. Regular school attendance is defined as being 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school'. This means that if the school is open for 190 days, then this is what your child is expected to attend.

Have a BOO-tiful Half Term!

Wishing all our pupils, families and friends a happy, restful half term break!



Ridgeway School

WOODEN HILL FEDERATION