



St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School

We act with love, build our faith and grow as people
"Let all that you do be done in love" - 1 Corinthians 16:14

Newsletter 27th February 2026

A message from the Headteacher - Mrs Mulholland

We are now in the holy season of Lent, a special time in the Church's year when we are called to reflection and renewal. The children have been thinking carefully about three key areas: spending more time in prayer and building their relationship with God; giving something up; and choosing to actively do something for others—through fundraising, giving, or acts of service within the community. It has been wonderful to hear their thoughtful and sincere responses to this important season.

It has also been a very successful and busy few weeks in school. Bikeability with Year 5 has been outstanding. The level of engagement, effort, manners and determination shown by the children has received excellent feedback.

Remarkably, we went from some children being unable to ride confidently at the start of the week to cycling safely on the roads and achieving their Level 2 award in just one week, an incredible achievement! We also marked Online Safety Week, followed by the NSPCC's Speak Out, Stay Safe assemblies. Please do take time to talk to your children about what they have learned during these important sessions.

Congratulations to Mrs Percy and her family on the safe arrival of baby Dorothy Percy, who made an early appearance nearly four weeks ahead of schedule during half-term. We are delighted to hear they are all doing well and have sent our warmest wishes from the whole school community. In school, Mrs Merry and Mrs Parker have seamlessly stepped into Year 1 and were brilliantly prepared to take the helm—we are very fortunate to have such a strong and dedicated team. Thank you also to everyone who supported the recent Book Fair. Your purchases have generated £401 for new library books, which is fantastic news. We are looking forward to involving the children in choosing inspiring new titles to enjoy. We continue to hold members of our community in our prayers. We have received news from the parish that Fr Danny is unwell and undergoing treatment. Please keep him in your prayers for a full and speedy recovery. We are also praying for Mrs De Sousa, our school librarian, who had an operation over the holidays. She is now recovering at home and will need at least six weeks to rest and regain her strength.

A serious note regarding school trips. We can only run trips if parents are prepared to pay their voluntary contribution. There is no additional funding within the school budget to cover shortfalls. As you will be aware from national news coverage, school finances are extremely tight. We cannot divert money allocated for staffing or essential resources to subsidise trips. If insufficient contributions are received, trips will have to be cancelled. This would be deeply disappointing for the children and unfair on the majority of families who do pay promptly. If you are experiencing genuine financial difficulty, please come and speak to me confidentially so that we can discuss a way forward. However, non-payment without communication will result in visits, speakers, trips and residentials being unable to proceed.

Finally, we look forward to welcoming you to Parents' Evening next week, and don't forget that World Book Day dress-up takes place next Thursday—we cannot wait to see the wonderful costumes!

Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

Mrs Mulholland

School Diary

FEBRUARY

27 PTA Meeting at 7pm

MARCH

4 Parents Meetings 1:30pm - 7pm

5 World Book Day
World Book Day Parade at 2:50pm

13 Mother's Day Assembly Year R and Nursery at 2:45pm

19 Years 3 and 4 Trip to Ufton Court

20 Non-uniform Day for £1

26 End of term - School Ends at 1:30pm

27 INSET DAY - School Closed

APRIL

13 Back to School - gates open at 8:35am

**SAVE THE DATE: Saturday
9th May 12pm - 4pm
SMC's Golden Jubilee
Celebration**





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SMC Nursery



The nursery team is delighted to share how wonderfully the children have been engaging in their recent learning over the past few weeks.

The topic, "We're Going on a Bear Hunt," has been a fantastic success. The children fully engaged with the story, showing great enthusiasm as they explored the different environments from the tale. From swishy swashy grass to thick oozy mud, they enjoyed bringing the story to life through role play and creative activities. Their confidence grew so much as they retold the story and joined in with repeated phrases.

A particularly exciting part of their learning was a special mystery in the classroom. A bear had been spotted, and the children eagerly became detectives to search for him. After a careful hunt, they found the bear and he was sad and lonely. The children showed great kindness, giving him a sandwich and a blanket to make him feel welcome. To celebrate, they brought in their own bears and enjoyed a jam sandwich picnic together, which was a huge hit.

The children took part in special events recently. We celebrated NSPCC Number Day through fun, practical number activities. Alongside this, we took part in RSPB Bird Week. The children enjoyed learning about different types of birds, looking out for them outdoors, and discussing what they noticed. We talked about how it is important to feed birds during the winter months when food can be harder to find. The children then made their own bird feeders to take home, encouraging them to care for wildlife beyond the nursery.

We began to learn about Lent, discussing how it is a time to be kind, helpful, and thoughtful towards others. The children shared ideas about ways they can show kindness, such as helping their friends, sharing, and using kind words.

We marked Safer Internet Day, introducing simple ideas about staying safe online.

The nursery team is now very excited to move on to the next topic of Traditional Tales where we will explore well-loved stories.





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Reception



Over the past few weeks in EYFS, we have had a very exciting adventure exploring the story *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen and Helen Oxenbury. The children were amazed when a bear appeared in our classroom and "stole" a sandwich! We quickly got to work writing fantastic wanted posters to help track him down, before setting off on our very own bear hunt. After lots of swishy swashy grass and squelchy squerchy mud, we finally found the bear and celebrated with a lovely teddy bears' picnic together. Alongside our storytelling, we have been exploring different shapes and using them creatively to make wonderful shape pictures. We have also started our computing sessions, and this week the children did a fantastic job learning how to log on to Purple Mash independently on the iPads. In RE, we have been learning about Lent and talking about how this is a special time to pray more and grow closer to God. Each child has been given a special friend in our class to keep in their prayers during Lent, helping us to think about kindness, friendship and caring for one another.



Year 1



Year 1 were very excited to return from break on Monday to find a crime scene in their classroom! A Wanted poster, basket, and pair of rounded glasses had been left inside. After reading the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* we realised the basket and glasses belonged to Grandma. We learned that a Big bad wolf was on the loose and set about trying to describe what he looked like so that we could help capture him. Watch this space for their posters next time. In Music we have been exploring pitch - high and low sounds and the children had great fun listening to a variety of instruments and working out what pitch they played at and why. We also learned a song about pitch. In History we have been learning about Kings, Queens and castles, thinking about things that have changed but also things that have remained the same. After the lovely news that Mrs Percy has had her baby, Mrs Parker and Mrs Merry have enjoyed joining the class and getting to know the children better.





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Year 2



What a whirlwind of discovery the last four weeks have been for our Year 2 explorers! We've travelled across the globe (and through time) to learn about the world around us. Here is a look at what we've been up to:

We recently wrapped up our Geography unit where we compared our home town of Bracknell to the snowy city of Tromsø in Norway. To bring our learning to life, the children created fantastic shoebox models to highlight the differences between:

Human Features: Such as our local roads and bustling buildings.

Physical Features: Including the dramatic Norwegian fjords, hills, and rivers.

We have now set sail on our new History unit focused on Famous Explorers. To tie this into our English work, we've been studying Charles Darwin. The children have been busy writing their own diary entries, imagining the incredible sights and strange new species Darwin encountered on his travels. Their writing has been truly inspired by his discoveries!

In Design and Technology, we went back to basics—the humble potato! We explored where potatoes come from and put our taste buds to the test. The children sampled a variety of cooked and raw potatoes (along with other veggies), using all five senses to describe the textures and flavours.

We've been finding our rhythm in Music lately! The children have been practicing how to read symbols that represent pitch. It has been wonderful to hear them singing and playing instruments to master those "high" and "low" sounds.

It is lovely to see the children so engaged with their "Explorer" theme. Their creativity in both their writing and their model-making has been a real highlight of the term!





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Year 3



Year 3 have continued to immerse themselves in our exciting Ancient Egypt theme, showing fantastic enthusiasm and curiosity in their learning.

In English, we have been reading and comparing an Egyptian version of the traditional Cinderella story. The children have enjoyed exploring how stories can change across different cultures and time periods. They are now writing their own narratives, focusing carefully on using speech and dialogue to bring characters to life, ensuring punctuation is accurate and conversations feel realistic and engaging.

In Maths, we have been developing our understanding of fractions, learning how to recognise, find, and compare fractions using diagrams and practical resources to support our reasoning.

In History, we have continued exploring Ancient Egypt, creating timelines to place this civilisation in context and learning about what daily life was like. The children have been particularly interested in the different jobs people had—such as scribes, farmers, craftsmen, and pharaohs—and how society was structured.

We also braved the rain for an exciting Geography field trip around our local area! The children explored local facilities, including the park, shops, schools, and transport links. Despite the wet weather, they showed great resilience and observation skills, thinking carefully about how our local area is organised and why these facilities are important to the community.

In Art, we have been exploring colour and painting techniques, experimenting with mixing shades and tones to enhance our creative work. In DT, the children have thoroughly enjoyed making magnetic models, applying their Science knowledge of magnets to design and build imaginative creations as part of our Magnetic Mysteries project.

In ICT, we have been learning about databases, understanding how information can be organised, searched, and interpreted effectively.

It has been a wonderfully busy and productive few weeks, and we are incredibly proud of Year 3's resilience, creativity, and enthusiasm in all that they do!





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Year 4

Year 4 have had a fantastic and productive few weeks of learning! In Maths, the children have been working hard on Fractions, exploring how fractions can be represented on a place value chart. They have demonstrated excellent perseverance and a growing confidence in their understanding. The children continue to work hard on their times tables, and their daily efforts are clearly building progress on TTRS. In English, we have been focusing on instruction writing, using the engaging theme "How to Slay the Minotaur." The children have thought deeply about language features and the impact of imperative verbs when writing clear and effective instructions. Their creativity and attention to detail have been impressive.

In R.E., we have begun our Lent unit. The children have reflected thoughtfully on how they can grow in faith and deepen their relationship with God during this special season. We have considered how Jesus might have felt during his 40 days and nights in the desert, and discussed ways we can pray, fast and give more throughout Lent.

As part of Computing, we are learning about Artificial Intelligence and revisited our learning from Safer Internet Day. The children were able to recall key knowledge about AI and discuss both its benefits and responsibilities thoughtfully.

Year 4 also thoroughly enjoyed the NSPCC's Number Day. The range of number activities provided a wonderful opportunity to see how numbers are all around us in everyday life.

As part of Mental health week, our class discussed and reflected on the theme of 'My space', children reflected on their sense of belonging within our class and school community.

Well done, Year 4 — keep up the amazing work!





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Year 5



We are already racing through the middle of the Spring term, and the children have been busy with a huge range of learning and activities! In Maths, we have been exploring fractions and decimals, learning how to convert between them and apply this knowledge to problem-solving. The children are becoming increasingly confident in recognising number relationships and explaining their reasoning clearly. Our English unit is focused on narrative writing with characterisation through speech. The children have been practising using direct speech, adverbials, and relative clauses to add detail and bring characters to life in their stories. Their writing is becoming much more expressive and engaging.

In Science, we are coming to the end of our Forces unit. The children can now confidently identify different types of forces and explain how mechanisms work. They have enjoyed testing ideas practically and thinking carefully about which forces are at work in everyday situations. In our French lessons, the children have been learning how to say and write the date, including the days of the week, months of the year, and numbers. They have also enjoyed asking and answering questions about their birthdays, learning how to say when their special day falls in the year. Their confidence in speaking aloud is growing beautifully. Do feel free to practise with them at home, just be prepared, as they may soon be correcting your pronunciation as well!

We had a fantastic time celebrating Number Day in support of the NSPCC. The children took part in a range of exciting number-based activities, and we would like to give a special thank you to Mr. Prower for organising PE-style maths games using speed stacking, they were a huge hit! We also joined an online Times Tables Rock Stars battle against schools across the country. Year 5 showed great enthusiasm and competitiveness throughout.

Following this, the children attended an NSPCC Speak Out, Stay Safe assembly, reinforcing the importance of speaking up and seeking help when needed. We also took part in an AI-themed Safer Internet Day Live Lesson. The children loved learning how AI works, thinking about how to design it responsibly, and even helping to programme a chatbot to speak like a Hooded Vulture! They showed fantastic teamwork, curiosity, and maturity when discussing how to stay safe online, a brilliant step towards becoming confident digital citizens.

The highlight of the week was undoubtedly Bikeability. Many children successfully achieved their Level 1 and Level 2 awards, gaining experience riding on roads, learning the Highway Code, and developing safe cycling skills. The instructors were incredibly impressed, describing the children as resilient, supportive, and excellent team members. Some children even learned to ride a bike for the very first time and we're immensely proud of their achievement. A huge thank you to Avanti Cycling for providing such encouragement and a wonderful opportunity for the children.

Looking ahead, we have lots to look forward to, including rehearsals for the Junior Music Festival, so I am sure the children will have plenty more exciting news to share with you in the coming weeks.

We would like to thank you for your continued support, it is always greatly appreciated and makes such a difference to the children's success.





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Year 6

Year 6 have been busy finishing their setting descriptions in English. They have worked on creating cohesion within and between paragraphs and have written some successful pieces based on the book *Malamander* and the sleepy town of Oddly on Sea. Our focus has now shifted on to integrating speech into narratives. This follows on nicely from the history topic of WWII as the narrative and dialogue that we are focusing on comes from the story of the *Chronicles of Narnia*. Our focus is on the scene where the children need to rush into their air raid shelter to evade the bombing from above. The children will learn how to integrate speech into their narrative so that it advances the action and conveys the character of the person speaking.

In maths we are moving rapidly through our units and the children are gaining confidence in applying their knowledge to answering reasoning questions using appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Before half term, they were surprised with their understanding of Algebra, which they thought would be extremely difficult! We are now working on place value within decimal numbers. In order to help your child, please encourage them to keep practising their times tables and maths vocabulary. This will enable them to improve their fluency and think about how to solve a problem rather than work out addition/multiplication facts.

The children have thoroughly enjoyed our trial of Dreambox maths. We complete 15 minutes of this after lunch every day and it is great to see their progress. Please do encourage your child to log on at home and keep practising whilst our trial lasts.

In PE, our 5 weeks of peripatetic hockey coaching has come to an end. All the children thoroughly enjoyed their sessions and made great progress in their understanding of the game. They ended the sessions with mall games and the coach was suitably impressed with their skills and sportsmanship.

We have finally finished our Gothic structures. These structures were designed to light up using our knowledge of electricity and circuits from science. I am sure the children will be asking for LED bulbs and copper tape so that they can make more of their own circuits at home!

We have officially concluded our World War II unit, with the children showing a real fascination for how the global landscape shifted during the 1940s. We explored how key turning points, such as the bombing of Pearl Harbour and Germany's invasion of Russia, fundamentally changed the course of the conflict and helped bring the war to a close. In our French sessions, we are now heading "out into the streets" with our new topic, 'En Ville'. The children are enjoying learning the names of various town landmarks and are busy practicing how to ask for and respond to directions. It is wonderful to hear the classroom buzzing with "Tournez à gauche!" as we build our confidence in navigating a new language.





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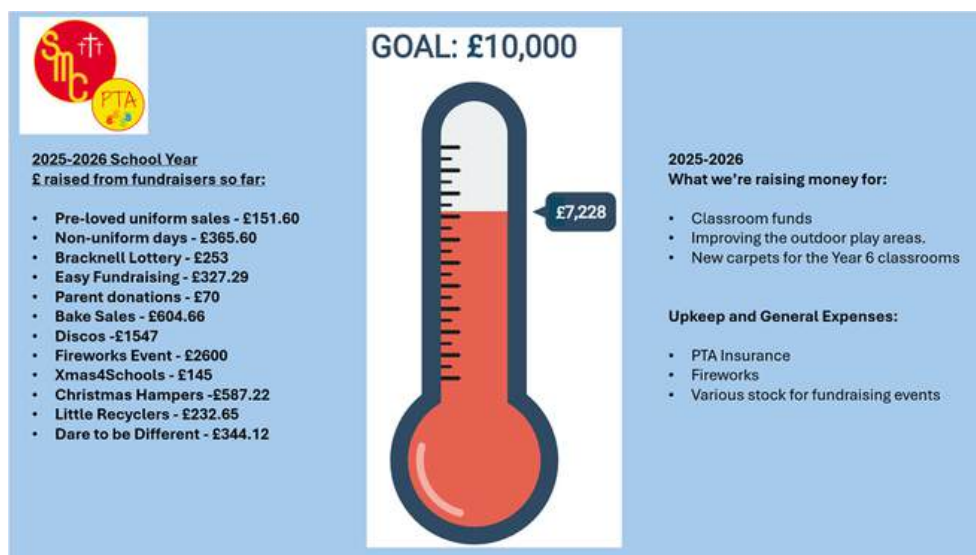
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Next PTA meeting: date tbc all welcome: <https://us05web.zoom.us/j/86033339450...>

Keep up to date with the PTA: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Smcpta>

PROFIT RAISED YEAR-TO-DATE:



How to help us raise funds:



If you are into trying your luck and hoping to win a lottery, please support our school by buying your tickets through this link:

<https://www.bracknellforestlottery.co.uk/support/st-margaret-clitherow-catholic-primary-school-pta>



easyfundraising partners with over 7,500 brands who will donate part of what you spend to a cause of your choice. It won't cost you any extra. The cost is covered by the brand.

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stmcpta>



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PTA events coming up:

Friday 20th March:

PTA Non Uniform Day

NON-UNIFORM DAY FOR £1

Friday, 20th March 2026

PLEASE SCAN CODE TO PAY ONLINE, 1.05



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Recent Sporting Events



Contact us: 01344 424030 or secretary@smc-bracknell.com



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Other Information

**GEMS**
Autism & ADHD Support Service

**the autism group**

1 on 1 Support Sessions

An online or over the phone, 60 minute session offering support and advice.

Suitable for Parents and Carers whom:

- Has a child/young person who may have, waiting assessment or has been diagnosed with Autism or AuDHD (Autism & ADHD).
- Require strategies for a new presenting issue.
- Attended workshops/courses previously and need further advice.
- Want to talk confidentially or uncomfortable with group sessions.
- Are neurodivergent themselves or have access needs.

Available for families residing in, or have a registered GP in East Berkshire.

To book your place contact GEMS:

 Gems.4Health@nhs.net

 0800 999 1342

Sign Up Today!



BINFIELD CRICKET CLUB



BE PART OF THE TEAM!

Your local cricket club is on the hunt for girls aged 7-15 to join our expanding girls section!

- ECB Level 2 coaches
- Softball or Hardball
- No experience necessary

Email for more info.

JUNIORS@BINFIELDCRICKETCLUB.CO.UK

**GEMS**
Autism & ADHD Support Service

Virtual Coffee Morning Eating and Movement

Friday 13th March - 10:00 - 11:00am

Join our online informal discussion.

What to expect?

Respectful and supportive discussion including:

- What works for your family at meal times
- What are your concern areas around eating
- How do you support your child with eating
- How you handle food centric activities and celebrations
- Encouraging affirming movement
- Eating out

25 spaces available!

Please note this is not a workshop but support group for parent/carers and any medical advice should be sought from your medical practitioner.

Sign Up Today!

Available for families who reside in or have a registered GP in East Berkshire with a child who is Autistic/ADHD (suspected/awaiting assessment/diagnosed)

To book your place contact GEMS:

 Gems.4Health@nhs.net

 0800 999 1342



**Bracknell Forest Educational Psychology Service**
Parent Carer Contact Line

- 30 minute conversation with an Educational Psychologist -

- Available to all Bracknell Forest parent carers -

- Wednesday mornings during term time -

- By phone or MS Teams -



Would you like advice on how to support your child at home?
Are you worried about your child's social skills?
Do you need some suggestions for your child's wellbeing?
Are you concerned about your child's learning?

An Educational Psychologist has training and experience in supporting children and their adults to overcome barriers so that they can access their learning.

In these short sessions we can provide advice and signposting to help you support your child.

Discussions are confidential.

Booking information:
[EPS Parent Carer Contact Line - Request for appointment - Fill out form](#)



Contact us: 01344 424030 or secretary@smc-bracknell.com



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Other Information

Supporting Your Children Workshops 2025 - 2026

To book a space email Inge.Taylor@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Each course is a **standalone 2-hour session**, is universal (not specific for SEND), aimed at parents of primary aged children and is for the adults supporting **not** the children themselves so **please arrange childcare if needed**

Once you have completed an enrolment form your space will be confirmed

Please only book if you are **going to be able to attend** to avoid other parents missing out.

All sessions unless stated otherwise take place at The Bracknell Open Learning Centre

Supporting Children to Overcome their Anxious Thoughts and Worries Exploring how anxiety affects primary aged children learning simple, effective techniques to support children to overcome their Anxious Thoughts and Worries.	
Monday 13 th April 2026	6.30 – 8.30 pm
Monday 8 th June 2026	6.30 – 8.30 pm
Managing Behaviour in a Positive Way A session exploring positive behaviour strategies enabling parents to gain practical tools for handling challenging behaviours with confidence and care.	
Thursday 05 th March 2026	6.30 – 8.30 pm
Thursday 23 rd April 2026	6.30 – 8.30 pm
Monday 22 nd June 2026	6.30 – 8.30 pm
Parenting your pre / early-teens in a Positive Way (aged 10 – 13) An insight into parenting, looking at positive behaviour strategies, different ways to strengthen communication / connection with your pre-teen child.	
Wednesday 4 th February 2026	6.30 – 8.30 pm
Parenting your teen in a Positive Way (aged 13 – 16) A session focused on using positive approaches to guide teenage behaviour, building stronger communication and connection during the teen years.	
Thursday 12 th February 2026	6.30 – 8.30 pm
Encouraging Resilience – Keep Calm and Bounce Back Gain practical tips, leaving you inspired and equipped to help children bounce back stronger; no matter what life throws their way	
Let me know if you would like to be on the list for future dates	
Transition to secondary school Gain practical tips, share experiences, and learn how to support your child through the exciting, sometimes challenging transition to secondary school.	
Monday 29 th June 2026	6.30 – 8.30 pm
Transition: Reception to Year 1 and beyond The move from Yr R to 1 is a big step in your child's learning journey. Session helps parents understand what the transition involves and how to support.	
Thursday 25 th June 2026	6.30 – 8.30 pm
A healthy night's sleep Sleep is essential for children's wellbeing, learning, and behaviour. Get practical tips to help children build healthy, lasting sleep habits	
Tuesday 17 th March 2026	9.30 – 11.30

Reducing Sibling Rivalry A supportive session, to give parents and caregivers tools to strengthen sibling bonds, whilst creating a calm and connected family environment.	
Let me know if you would like to be on the list for future dates	
Family Dynamics Family life comes in many forms, and every child deserves to feel secure / supported. Session offers practical guidance navigating varying dynamics.	
Monday 9 th February 2026	9.30 – 11.30

To book a space or get further information email Inge.Taylor@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

Each toolkit is universal (not SEND specific) aimed at primary aged children & not suitable for younger

siblings to attend and will be held at the Bracknell Open Learning Centre

Once you have completed an enrolment form your space will be confirmed

Please only book if you are going to be able to attend to avoid other parents missing out.

EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) A 2-week toolkit (you are expected to attend both sessions) Week 1 – parent only session looking at - What EBSA is, how to support your child to build 'being in school' resilience and what you can expect schools to do. Week 2 – parents + child (need school's permission for child to attend) looking at supporting children to challenge 'What if's?' produce resilience tools and next steps.	
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Easter fun

Free holiday activities and food (HAF) for children and young people entitled to benefit related free school meals (FSM).

Bracknell Forest Council is working closely with local companies to help support a wide range of children's Easter holiday clubs.

The holiday clubs provide:

- sports
- swimming
- theatre
- dance
- arts and crafts
- and so many more fun activities!

Most clubs provide a healthy meal and snacks. Check the clubs booking page for more information.

The holiday activities and food programme is a Department for Education funded programme to support children aged 4-16 years (Reception - Year 11) in receipt of benefits related free school meals.

Booking is available from **2 March 2026** for children registered for free school meals.

Register for free school meals: www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/free-school-meals
Book your place on the HAF programme: bit.ly/haf-bracknell

get a **free Kellogg's breakfast every school holiday**

Morrisons CAFE