



The Avenue School

Autumn Newsletter 2025/26

Head teacher's message

As we come to the end of a very busy Autumn term, I want to share some of the things we have achieved as a school community.

This term we have used our new minibus to get young people from 2 classes in KS3, swimming at Willesden Leisure Centre. This will be rolled out to other classes with the hope that all children get to go swimming this year. I am passionate about children being given the opportunity to learn to swim as I think it is a great leisure activity.

Florence joined us as a life skills teacher in September. The classes in secondary have been learning ways in which they can be more independent, ranging from sorting clothes to making cakes and all of the skills in between.

This term we have been having weekly celebration assemblies in our primary and secondary groups. It has been lovely to see the children develop their sense of community. The children and young people who receive a certificate get to choose if they get everyone to clap or give them a "hip, hip, hooray". They are usually thrilled by the response and especially enjoy it if they get to speak into the microphone.

We have created The Avenue Family and Friends Association (FFA) who will be running several stalls in our Christmas Market in the last week of term. We are working with them to raise funds for several areas around school but notably to develop further resources in the playground – we are aiming for a climbing wall and sensory equipment to fulfil our immersion room to the best of its ability. We appreciate all of their hard work for this event and their continued support of the school.



We now have Dare playscheme on site during school holidays and on Saturdays. For some of our children and young people being somewhere familiar really helps them to feel calm and be engaged with the activities available.

We have spent the last year working really hard on the recruitment of staff and we are very close to being fully staffed by January. Alongside this is a comprehensive staff training programme. As ever we are passionate about seeing the fresh ideas which new staff bring to our school.

I would like to thank you for your continued support. I hope to see many of you in the last week of term as we celebrate Christmas and get to show you some of the wonderful things we do in school.

I wish you all a wonderful and restful holiday break and I look forward to seeing all of the children and young people back on Wednesday 7th January 2026.

Penny Doswell - Head Teacher

This Year

International Day

International day began in the morning with our assemblies where we listened to music from around the world and held a parade to celebrate our many different cultures. It was wonderful to see so many children and young people dressed in their traditional clothes.

Then in the afternoon, Michaela, who has been working in our café, provided live music with her steel pan and laid out was a feast of food generously donated by parents and staff. Classes were invited to come to the hall in groups and everyone was enjoying it so much that many wanted to stay! We had children who find it a challenge to eat at school, tucking into food because it was familiar (and very delicious) and I was so impressed by children enjoying being in a loud, busy environment.



I see our role as a school, to provide opportunities for children to surprise us and this was certainly one of those occasions! This is a small step towards our children and young people being able to manage busy environments out in their communities – whether it is being in a busy shopping centre or going to a family party.

If you were able to send in food or managed to come – thank you. We really appreciate your commitment and energy.

Penny Doswell - Head Teacher



This Year



This Year

Sixth Form & Pelican Class

This term, the classes have begun community visits to practise the skills learned in school. We have been visiting The Library at Willesden Green, where the students explored the museum, used the library's facilities, and learned how to borrow books with their own library cards.

As part of our life skills programme, we also started shopping trips to Tesco. Students have been finding items on our list, scanning their shopping, and packing the bags. We were even praised by Tesco staff for their growing independence.

It's just the beginning of an exciting independent journey for our young adults at The Avenue School!

Jesus Martinez - Sixth Form Teacher



Physical Education

It has been another bumper term for PE at The Avenue School! Each class has been settling in great to their PE lessons. This term, the students have been focusing on their fundamental movement skills. It's been wonderful to see the effort and engagement the students have been showing.

There has also been some very impressive displays of throwing and catching, target throwing and obstacle course climbing. It will be great to see this continue in the new year. Have a great Christmas and New Year.

Donagh O'Dwyer - PE Teacher



Creative Arts

Creative Arts Project

Pupils in Dove and Parakeet classes have been enjoying working with Chloe, a visiting artist from Create Arts as part of their new Our Stories project.

Pupils have been creating works of art linked to stories used in class using a wide variety of different media over the last 4 weeks. We really enjoyed sharing their artwork with parents and carers on 12th December.



Music of Life

Pupils in KS3, 4 and 5 have been attending accessible choir sessions with professional singers and musicians from Music of Life. Many pupils have been enjoying the opportunity to take the lead in songs in the role of conductor. Sessions will continue in the new year.



Holiday activities:

Brent Holiday Activities and Food Programme: Brent have a wealth of activities planned for children and young people over the festive holiday as part of their HAF programme - please click the icon to see what's happening in your area.



Brent Libraries Activities: Brent Libraries have organised a range of storytelling and arts and crafts activities over the festive period - please click the link to see what's happening near you.



Festive I-spy: go for a walk around your local area - how many things can you tick off from our I-spy list?



Amy McNicholas - Assistant Headteacher

Inclusion Team

It has been great to welcome everyone back and get to know all our new pupils and meet some of their families through our parent events and coffee mornings.

At the end of last half term, we said a fond farewell to Barbara, our Verbal Behaviour Supervisor, so that she could enjoy some time travelling. Over the summer, we were delighted to successfully recruit a new Verbal Behaviour Supervisor and Behaviour Analyst, Emma. This timing allowed her to complete a thorough handover with Barbara before the holidays, ensuring a smooth transition. She has now spent time getting to know the pupils and staff and has settled into her role really well.



This term we have continued supporting pupils to settle in to their new classes and provide training and support for all of our new staff as well as continuing to provide CPD opportunities for our existing staff.

Claire has been working alongside some of our families who have kindly set up a friends and family association, we are grateful for their support and excited for some fun fundraising events!

Therapy Team

As the Trust grows, so does the therapy team - this term, we were happy to welcome our new Occupational Therapist Georgia.

Over the term, we have delivered various training aimed at maintaining and enhancing therapy provision. Both the Speech and Language Therapy (SaLT) team and Occupational Therapy (OT) team provided whole staff training for all schools reviewing the SaLT and OT service delivery model that reinforced our collaborative and embedded approach. The therapy team also delivered various bespoke trainings for schools. This included training on making visuals for communication and learning, early language learning and interaction, and optimal use of alternative and augmentative communication (AAC), delivered by the SaLT team with the aim of impacting and enriching our delivery of communication targets across all schools, staff, and families. Training delivered by the occupational therapy team included promoting independence in self-care occupations and supporting feeding with neuro-divergent individuals.

We hope you all enjoy some quality family time over the upcoming holiday break.

Maths

It has been an amazing start to the academic year, with pupils across all phases engaging enthusiastically in their maths learning. Our early years and primary classes have particularly enjoyed exploring number, shape, and problem-solving through hands-on, sensory-rich activities and carefully chosen resources. Meanwhile, our older pupils have already begun applying maths in functional, meaningful ways that support independence and confidence.

Our much-loved school shop and school cinema are up and running again this term, providing motivating real-life opportunities to practise key numeracy skills. Whether counting coins, comparing prices, buying tickets, or identifying seat numbers, pupils continue to apply maths in enjoyable, purposeful contexts.

This term, we were also delighted to welcome members of the LAB and the Trustees, who visited to see how maths is delivered at The Avenue School. I shared a presentation outlining our maths intent, implementation, areas for development, and plans for the year. This was followed by an engaging learning walk across classes.

Feedback was extremely positive, highlighting pupils' strong engagement, the clear progression across key stages, and the consistency with which teachers and support staff embed functional maths throughout the curriculum. We look forward to building on this positive start as the year continues.

Daniel Alvarez - Maths Lead



Literacy

The Avenue School has had a fantastic start to the academic year! Our recent Literacy Lead meeting with the Director of Education was a great success, showing that our teams are delivering meaningful and engaging literacy experiences for all pupils.

I shared key storytelling non-negotiables, which support consistency, enhance storytelling and help staff develop pupils' communication skills and participate in creative ways.

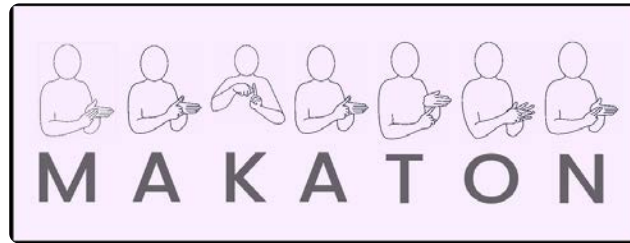
We are delighted to welcome Jump Drama Stories back during the final week of term. Their immersive sessions always spark imagination and laughter, and we look forward to another exciting adventure.

Dove and Parakeet classes have been enjoying a Create Arts experience this term. Parakeet explored healthy living through The Boy Who Loved Broccoli, while Dove discovered Katie in London. These workshops allow pupils to experience stories in a sensory and magical way, developing creativity and confidence.

Throughout the sessions, children have expressed themselves through dance, movement, artwork, and storytelling. It has been a joy to see their enthusiasm, imagination, and communication thriving!

Marzena Slowik - Literacy Lead





Makaton Friendly Status – Some Exciting News!

We are delighted to announce that **Manor School** and **The Avenue School** have officially achieved **Makaton Friendly Status**.

This accreditation recognises our commitment to creating communication-rich environments, where signs and symbols are used consistently to support all pupils. This milestone reflects the hard work of staff, the enthusiasm of our pupils, and the dedication of everyone involved in promoting accessible communication.

We thank all the teams who contributed by completing training, developing visual supports, and embedding Makaton into everyday practice. This is a wonderful achievement, and one we are incredibly proud to celebrate as a Trust.

Pupil Support and Engagement

This term, pupils across the Trust have been increasingly confident in using Makaton to:

- Make choices throughout the school day
- Participate in whole-class teaching, group work, and circle times
- Engage enthusiastically with the Trust-wide Sign/Phrase of the Week
- Support emotional regulation, expressing feelings such as happy, sad, help, or finished
- Sign spontaneously in social settings, such as the dining hall or playground

Class teams have observed and praised improvements in expressive language, confidence, and social interaction for many pupils. Classes have also enjoyed signing activities such as songs, stories, and games, which have further boosted enthusiasm and skill development.

We celebrate the hard work pupils have put into using Makaton this term. Their engagement has been central to achieve our Makaton Friendly Trust status, and we are incredibly proud of them.

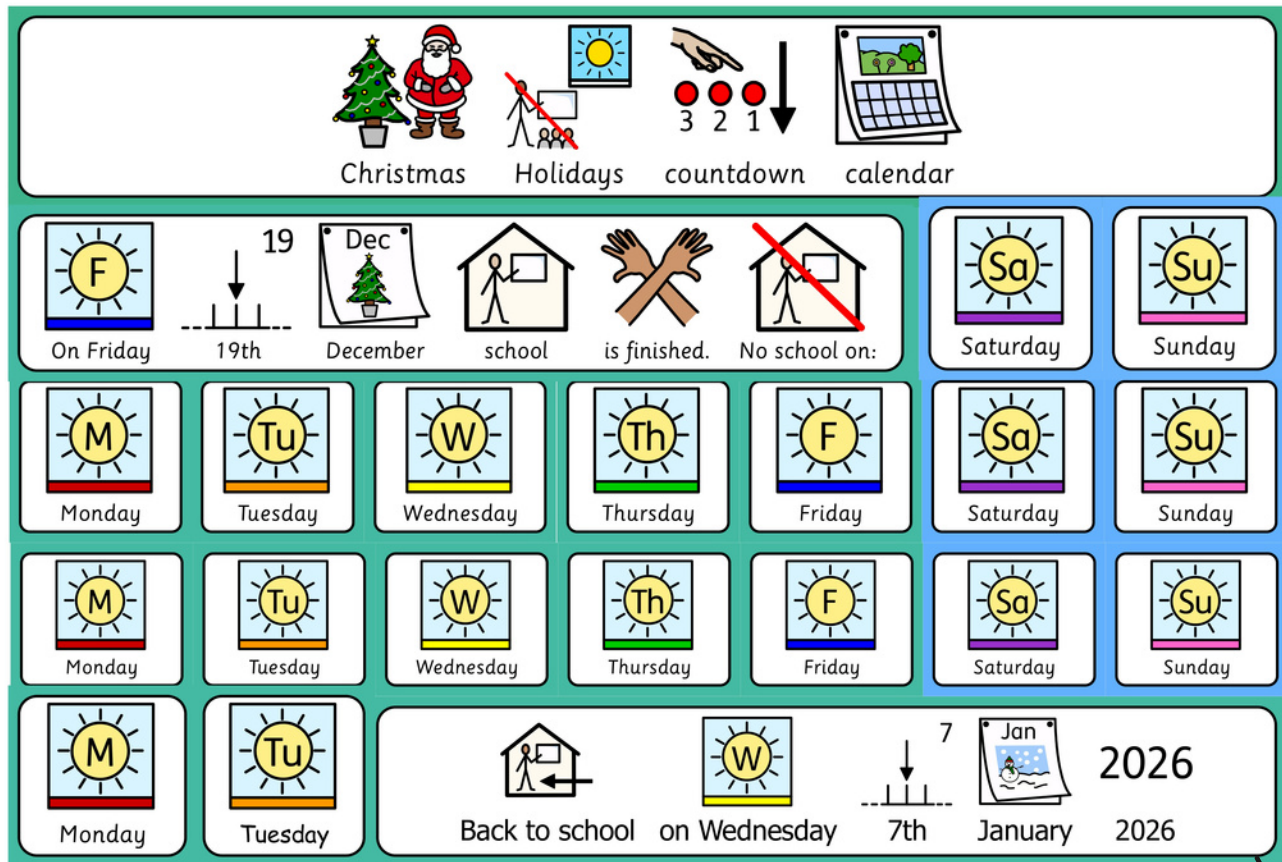
Looking Ahead to Spring Term

Next term, we will continue building on this momentum by:

- Providing more staff training to support consistent use of signs and phrases
- Maintaining standards for Makaton Friendly accreditation at Manor and The Avenue School
- Supporting Wembley Manor towards becoming a Makaton Friendly school



Diary Dates



[Click here for a printable PDF!](#)

Autumn recap 2025

