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# Red carpets and rocket launches: How Surrey schools celebrated the return of pupils

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By [Hannah Lemieux](#)  
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(Image: South Farnham School)

Schools across Surrey welcomed back pupils through the playground gates for the first time in many months, with classrooms finally replacing kitchen tables and home-schooling.

While many schools in the county opted to keep the day “as normal as possible” for the children, other set-ups decided to celebrate the occasion.

One primary school in Smallfield, [Horley](#), near the Surrey/West Sussex border, decided to treat pupils to a big surprise “welcome back” treat, to celebrate the first day back of school following the multiple lockdowns.

[Burstow Primary School](#) headteacher, Claire Hodgson, explained to [SurreyLive](#) : “We hired a red carpet, rainbow balloons, an industrial bubble machine and a music system. We also clapped them on arrival and they each received a sticker saying ‘I am king/queen of the challenge’.

“During the day we have worked with the children on what they have all learnt during lockdown. It’s been about empowering them on their first day back at school and we also awarded them all with special certificates.”

The day was kept a secret for the children and parents from the school were supportive of the celebrations.

One parent told SurreyLive: “I can honestly say that Burstow have gone above and beyond in lockdown and they really want to support the children when they come back.”



 (Image: Burstow Primary School)

[South Farnham School](#) also marked the day with a variety of activities and kicked off a fun-filled British Science Week.

“South Farnham School is thrilled to welcome back the children,” said deputy headteacher Esther Whitbourn. “Staff have been busy preparing the site for the children, making sure everything is safe and welcoming.

“The children enjoyed celebrating their return with a virtual science show and they were treated to a series of experiments, including the launching of the South Farnham School rocket 120m into the air. Our infant and junior site also enjoyed a virtual assembly to welcome them back and introduce International Women’s Day.”

Esther added: “The children were thrilled to see their friends in the playground again and they have definitely missed using the gym equipment. It was a fantastic first day back. We are so proud of how the children did with remote learning and it was lovely to see their happy faces this morning at the gate.”

At [Epsom Primary and Nursery School](#), they put on a “Welcome Back Ceremony” to spread the joy.

Staff had been busy decorating the front gates with balloons and “welcome back” messages for when the children returned this morning. Teachers and the children of key workers, who’ve been attending school throughout the pandemic, also added their own messages of support to the decorations.

All schools in the county have had to adapt to make establishments as safe as possible for the children.

[Hazelwood School](#) in Oxted has introduced UV-C cabinets to classrooms as a solution to disinfect iPads used by teachers and pupils.

These special Uvisan cabinets disinfect any handheld or portable digital equipment put inside, using a light exposure cycle that lasts less than five minutes. The cabinet at Hazelwood School allows teachers to disinfect their iPads and headsets quickly and effectively between each use - ensuring the equipment is virus-free for the next user.