

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY
CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

"Let all that you do be done in love." 1 Corinthians 16:14



NEWSLETTER

19th April 2024



A warm welcome back to the Summer Term and I do hope you all had a wonderful Easter break. It is always a treat to return for the summer term with lighter mornings, longer hours of daylight, warmer weather (hopefully?!) and a chance to enjoy and make the most of our superb school grounds. As we journey through this season of Eastertide we rejoice at the new life around us and reflect upon the real story of Easter and proclaim the news of the risen Lord –

Alleluia, Christ is risen. He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

The term ahead looks as busy and exciting as ever with lots going on and lots to look forward to. Next week we will issue the 'Dates for the Diary' sheet detailing the events and activities taking place this term. At present there are just a few finishing touches and dates/details to confirm. Please keep it somewhere safe and refer to it as necessary. Please remember that all newsletters and key communication from the school appears on the school website (www.stthomaspri.org) and are also sent electronically via Parent Hub.

This half term we will be thinking very much of our Year 6 children as they complete their end of Key Stage 2 assessments (SATs). We are very confident that they will approach these with confidence, determination and resilience and demonstrate their true potential and the progress they have made over their time at St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School. Good luck to everyone involved!

We will endeavour to keep you up to date and fully informed through use of Parent Hub, the school website and fortnightly newsletters. Please take the time to read them as a great deal of time and effort goes into preparing them. Thank you for your continued support and encouragement and we look forward to working with you in partnership over the coming term.

Summer Uniform – Reminder!

It was wonderful to see all the children returning on Monday morning in their summer uniforms with some lovely new, crisp white polo shirts on display. By the end of the week almost 100% of children were in correct and approved summer uniform – thank you! Nobody should now be wearing a school tie and collared shirt in Key Stage 2 (winter uniform), but following the school uniform policy and guidance clearly displayed on the school website or in your child's homework diary (KS2). We have had to mention to a number of boys about the colour of their socks – these must be black or grey only (NOT white or patterned).

Can I also remind you that girls who wear hairbands/clips..etc. must wear them in the approved school colours and they must be of a size that they do not become a distraction or hinderance to themselves or others. Children with long hair are also required to have this tied back and away from their face.

Children are NOT permitted to come to school with patterns, logos or designs shaved into their hair; dyed hair or hair colouring is NOT permitted.

We expect our school uniform to reflect our high expectations across the primary school and we thank you for your support in this matter. As we notice children wearing incorrect uniform they will get a reminder sticker placed in their reading diary or homework diary.



St George's Day – 23rd April 2024



Having determined the new names of our 4 Houses – named after our patron saints – St George, St Andrew, St David and St Patrick, we reach the fourth and final of their feast days for this academic year. Tuesday 23rd April is St George's Day, as well as being William Shakespeare's birthday!

On this day we are inviting all the children who are in St George's House to wear non-school uniform and dress in their House colour which is **RED**. This opportunity is only for children in St George's House as the other Houses have now all celebrated their saints' day. We do hope that all the St George's children encouraged by their House Captains will take pride in marking this event. In preparation, the children in St George's House may like to research some facts about the life of St George (and the dragon!) and share it with their classteacher.

Staffing Update

After 18 years at the school **Mrs Jeni Wild** has tendered her resignation and will leave St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School at the end of this academic year (July 2024). I know this has been a particularly difficult decision for Mrs Wild, filled with mixed emotions after such a long and successful association with our school. Mrs Wild will be relocating to Derbyshire to spend and share more time with her family and enjoy an exciting new chapter in her life.

We will all be very sorry to be losing such an outstanding and valued member of our teaching staff, but I am sure you will join me in thanking her and wishing Mrs Wild and her family every success for the future and the new and exciting experiences that lie ahead. After many years of being associated with the school as both a member of staff and a parent, I am sure there will be many fond and happy memories to reflect upon.

Over the remainder of this term, the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team will turn their attentions to a robust recruitment process to fill this part-time vacancy.

Year 6 SATs

As we draw closer to the month of May, which for all primary schools is a very important month, the children and staff continue to work very hard in preparing for the statutory Key Stage 2 SATs assessments that are just around the corner. As a Primary School we have been working exceptionally hard to prepare our Year 6 children for these tests. I am confident that the staff and children will approach SATs Week, commencing on 13th May 2024, with determination, confidence and faith in their own abilities.

I would ask you to keep them all in your thoughts and prayers. I am sure you will join me in wishing them good luck and every success in their final preparations ahead of the real thing.



Upper School – Confirmation Classes

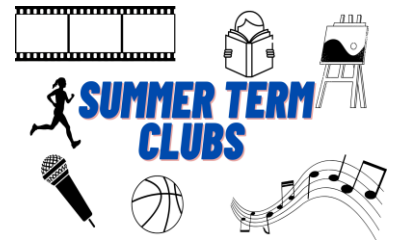
We now have **25** of our Upper School children who will be starting confirmation preparation classes on Wednesday next week after school with Fr. Mark. Like last year, this is another large group and all are excited at taking this next important step in their journey of faith. Our weekly class-based Eucharists have really given all our children an opportunity to explore, question and become confident with the sacrament of the Mass/Eucharist and I think this is a key factor in seeing so many children wanting to be confirmed.



These candidates are now preparing to be confirmed at St Thomas of Canterbury Church on Sunday 21st July 2024 and will receive the sacrament of confirmation from Bishop Jonathan Baker, the Bishop of Fulham. Over the coming weeks these children will continue to complete confirmation preparation classes with Fr. Mark and revisit their baptismal promises and understanding of their faith. I hope you will be able to pray for these children and their families at this very special time.

Summer Term Clubs/ Extra Curricular Activities

On Wednesday you will have received via Parent Hub a copy of the new clubs and extra curricular timetable for the **Summer Term 2024**. At this stage we can confirm these clubs but additional ones may become available later on in the term as staff have more time to offer. I would like to thank all the staff and volunteers who are willing to give of their time and expertise for the children of our school. I hope you will encourage your children to offer their appreciation, not only in words, but also through their attendance and dedication. Should you have any queries or concerns, please arrange to speak with the Club Leader. Thank you.



‘Separating Better’ App

The Separating Better app, funded by the [Reducing Parental Conflict](#) Programme at the Department for Work and Pensions and developed working with relationship experts at OnePlusOne, aims to help parents/carers separate more amicably for the benefit of everyone involved, especially children.

The app contains:

- Budgeting and legal tools
- Parenting plans
- New videos on healthy conflict management and communication skills
- Evidence-based advice on separation and co-parenting

The app is part of a test and learn strategy on digital approaches to relationship support. It can be downloaded from app stores ([IOS](#) and [Android](#))

Moments Matter, Attendance Counts

Improving school attendance is everyone’s business and, to tackle the challenge we face, we need to work together. Did you know....?

Attendance: the top facts to know & share

The link between attendance and attainment is clear:

- In 2018/19, just 40% of persistently absent (PA) children in KS2 achieved expected KS2 standards, compared with 84% of pupils who regularly attended school.
- 36% of PA children in KS4 got 9 to 4 in their English and maths GCSEs, compared with 84% of regular attenders.

It’s never too late to benefit from good attendance:

- More than half (54%) of pupils who were PA in Year 10 and then rarely absent in Year 11, passed at least 5 GCSEs, compared to 36% of pupils who were persistently absent in both years.

But attendance is important for more than just attainment:

- Regular school attendance can facilitate positive peer relationships, which is a protective factor for mental health and wellbeing.

Attendance in the first week of school in September sets up attendance throughout the year (and it’s time to start preparing for the new academic year now):

- Evidence from a Children’s Commissioner report showed that children who miss one of the first few days of the new term for unauthorised reasons are much more likely to miss long periods of their schooling than their peers who attended those first few days. These children had a predicted overall absence of almost 45%, or 31 days across the term.
- In the 2022/23 academic year, of those who had at least one day of absence in the first week of term, 55.5% went on to be persistently absent.

**MOMENTS
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Finally....

Early next week you will receive (via Parent Hub) the new EYFS, Key Stage 1, Lower and Upper School Curriculum Guide for Parents/Carers for the Summer Term. Please have a look through this with your child to see the exciting areas they will be exploring over the course of this term. Hopefully you will be able to identify some ways in which you can support their knowledge and understanding at home – and bring this in to school to share!

As always we are looking forward to working in partnership with you over this new summer term and thank you in advance for your trust, commitment and support of the school.

Enjoy the weekend – see you on Monday!

Mr D. Moran
Headteacher

A Christian community where children are known by name and loved, which empowers them to learn and to grow in faith, knowledge and fellowship.

And...please remember if you have any questions or queries or comments feel free to contact us:

admin@stthomaspri.essex.sch.uk