

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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



NEWSLETTER

14th November 2025



The school fell silent on Tuesday morning as we came together for collective worship as a school community at 11 o'clock to observe 2 minutes silence in memory of all those lost in war and conflict. We also remembered all those families who have been affected by war; men, women and children. It is so important that we mark Armistice Day or Remembrance Day (11th November) in this way and give thanks for all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

It is always a real joy after the October half term to see the return of winter uniform with pristine white shirts and school ties on display in **Key Stage 2**. I know that as a school we take great pride in our appearance and presentation both in school and when out in the local and wider community. Thank you for continuing to support our high expectations and school uniform policy. A few children in Key Stage 2 do not have school ties on or are wearing school ties with polo shirts or shirts with the incorrect collar. If you need a school tie they can be ordered and paid for through ParentPay and we will give the tie directly to your child. All children must be wearing collared plain white shirts with their top buttons done up so you can clip on your tie. Let's see if next week we can have 100% correct school uniform...and don't forget to tuck your shirts in!

Thank you to everyone who has already sent in a shoebox for the Operation Christmas Child appeal. I have witnessed a growing number being carried into school and carefully stored in the classrooms and corridors over the past few weeks. Our collection date will be some time in the week commencing 17th November, so please do keep sending in your donations to ensure they get to vulnerable children ready for Christmas.

As always there are a number of important reminders in this newsletter regarding up and coming events and I hope you will respond to them accordingly. Please remember that the vast majority of the correspondence we send out to you is always freely accessible via Parent Hub or from the school website, so if you think you may have missed a letter, please visit www.stthomaspri.org or check your Parent Hub channels.

Parents' Evening – Thank You!

We were thrilled to have **81%** of our parent community sign up for parents' evening last week through our online virtual platform, SchoolCloud. Over the course of the two evenings we enjoyed the opportunity to meet with you and discuss the successes of your children and their achievements since the beginning of this academic year. I know the teaching staff really enjoy these opportunities and developing stronger links between home and school. I do hope you were able to share some of the feedback with your child/ren and demonstrate how proud you are of their enthusiasm and efforts. Many thanks for your continued support.

Staffing Update

At the end of this autumn term we will be saying goodbye to **Mrs Melanie Tucker** as she prepares to leave her teaching post here at our school. Mrs Tucker currently covers some of our planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) requirements across Key Stage 2, but has until recently also taken on the role of classteacher. I know we are very sorry to see Mrs Tucker leave our school community and wish her every success and happiness for the future.

Miss Melissa Thompson has also left her post as Catering Assistant and a valued member of our catering team. I am sure you will join me in thanking her for her hard work in ensuring our children receive tasty and nutritious food each day. We are currently advertising the Catering Assistant vacancy – details were sent out via Parent Hub.

I am sure you will keep both members of staff in your thoughts and prayers as their time here comes to an end.

Bishop Luke – Bishop of Richborough Visit

Last Thursday, we were delighted to welcome Bishop Luke (Bishop of Richborough) to our school as he came in to spend the day at St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School. We were honoured to learn that we were the first school visit he had undertaken since being consecrated Bishop of Richborough back in February 2025!

During the morning, Bishop Luke led collective worship for both EYFS/KS1 and KS2 speaking to the children about why we bless and give thanks for buildings and how we use our senses to experience our environment, our world and our encounters with God. Later on in the morning Bishop Luke led a short service of dedication and blessing for our new Sensory Cabin, attended by a small group of adults who have worked so hard to bring this wonderful new resource to our school, and some children who were keen to show Bishop Luke how it all worked! Bishop Luke even removed his shoes and got stuck in to experience the equipment and sensory resources on offer!!

Later in the morning and throughout the afternoon he visited all 18 of our classes, speaking to the children about his work as a Bishop and answering their questions – some which proved very tricky!! Bishop Luke left at the end of the day with a really good impression of our school and how our mission statement and ethos underpins all that we do. I would also like to thank Fr. Mark for also spending the day with us and accompanying the Bishop around our school. It was a very special occasion.



Open Classrooms – Thank You!

It was wonderful to welcome so many parents/carers and other visitors in to school on Tuesday afternoon for our 'Open Classrooms' event. This provided a fantastic opportunity for you to view your child's working environment, see where they sit and marvel at the displays within the classroom and around the school. I know the staff were very grateful for your support and interest in what your children have been completing so far this academic year. There will be another opportunity to repeat this event later in the academic year and we can't wait to invite you back!

Children in Need 2025

Today and across the course of this week we have been marking and supporting Children in Need! Once again we have spread some of the activities and events over the week to try and engage with more parents/carers, staff and children. It was wonderful to welcome all those 'Daily Mile' runners (and some walkers!) on Tuesday as we all stretched our legs before the school day started. Thursday saw a good number of people taking the opportunity to enjoy a hot chocolate and cake at the end of day sale. Thank you to all those 'bakers' who supported us by baking or providing cakes and biscuits for sale. Today it has been a chance to leave our school uniforms at home and enjoy a non-uniform day in support of this amazing charity (despite the rain!)

A special mention must go to Mrs McKechnie, our Children in Need Co-ordinator, and Class 6Mc who have planned and organised the many events which have successfully taken place. I do hope that every child has enjoyed the opportunity to take a full and active part and bring in some money to support our fundraising efforts. Thank you for your support!



Reception Admissions for September 2026

As you may be aware, the primary school (Reception) admission round opened on **Monday 10th November 2025** for parents/carers of children to apply for a Reception school place for the academic year that starts in September 2026. Even if you have a sibling at our school already, you still need to apply if your child is due to start in Reception in September 2026.

The statutory national closing date for applications is **15th January 2026**.

From **10th November 2025**, applications can be made online via www.essex.gov.uk/admissions. 99% of parents/carers in Essex applied online last year. All of the application information is available from this website.

The website www.essex.gov.uk/admissions also has a copy of the Primary Education in Essex 2026-2027 booklet and the Schools Admissions Policies Directories contain details of all admission policies.

UK Houses of Parliament

On Thursday 13th November we were delighted to take our House Captains, Sports Captains, Music Captains and KS2 CATS reps on an educational visit and tour of the UK Houses of Parliament. This was a complete honour and privilege as we were taken behind the scenes to see how this historic and beautiful building operates and visit both chambers – the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

Seeing the green and red benches in action really gave a sense of how democracy works in our country and many of us saw for real, things which we had only ever seen on the television.

As well as a tour the children also had an opportunity to take part in an educational workshop – to better understand how MPs and the Lords debate and set Bills. We certainly saw signs of future politicians and MPs in the making! Finally, we were joined by our MP for Brentwood & Ongar, Alex Burghart who spoke to the children about his work and answered some of their questions about life as an MP.

I know that all the children and adults who attended had a great experience and we hope to be able to apply again for a visit in the not-too-distant future.

Coats!

With the colder weather beginning to settle in I would like to give a general reminder about coats. Rather worryingly we still have a growing number of children who seem to come to school without a coat. Many of you may arrive by car in the morning but the children still need a coat in school to wear at morning break and lunchtime. Please ensure your child has a coat in school every day and that it is clearly named. The staff are constantly reminding children to put their coats on during the day and we hope by wrapping up we can prevent coughs and colds developing. Thank you.

Finally....

Next week we are aiming to send out information about our various **Christmas productions and performances** at the end of this term. This will include details about dates, times and ticket allocations. Please look out for this letter...coming soon!

Thank you for your continued support and have a good weekend.

Mr D. Moran
Headteacher



And...please remember if you have any questions or queries or comments feel free to contact us: admin@stthomaspri.essex.sch.uk

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