

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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



NEWSLETTER

10th January 2025

Happy New Year!



In this first newsletter for 2025, may I take this opportunity on behalf of everyone at St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School to wish you a Happy New Year! I do hope you all had a wonderful Christmas period and that 2025 has got off to a good start? I know I have been able to speak to many of you at the EYFS/KS1 and KS2 school gates since our return to school on 6th January and it is wonderful to see this new spring term getting off to a positive start. As I have said in previous years, although it is referred to as the spring term it feels decidedly wintery at present and the very dark mornings make it a struggle to get up! There has been the ongoing threat of snow in the forecast but thankfully this has not resulted in anything significant, unlike other areas in the country! For now, although cold, normal service continues with some slightly milder weather hopefully just around the corner.

After the marathon of the autumn term, we have a sprint in the spring term as we try and cram in as much as possible. This includes various opportunities for you to be involved in school life such as our new EYFS & KS1 Story Sharing sessions (details sent out on Wednesday), school Eucharists and Parents' Evening at the end of the term. For parents/carers of children in Mrs Antrobus' class (1A) please take note now of the fact that your Parents' Evening meetings will take place earlier on Wednesday 5th & Thursday 6th March to ensure these are held ahead of Mrs Antrobus starting her maternity leave.

Alongside this newsletter you should have also received, via Parent Hub, the 'Dates for the Diary' list for this spring term. Please do keep them handy as it will allow you to take a full and active part in school life and ensure you don't miss some of those key dates and events. Please remember you can always access the dates via our school website as well – www.stthomaspri.org

The staff and I look forward to your continued support, trust and confidence over the coming term and hope once again we can continue to work in collaboration and partnership with you and your children.

Staffing Update

As previously communicated, many of you will be aware that **Mrs Antrobus** is pregnant and expecting her baby in April 2025. Mrs Antrobus has now informed us of her final day in school before she begins her maternity leave – this will be Friday 14th March 2025. At present, we are holding a recruitment process to appoint a maternity cover classteacher to take on Mrs Antrobus' teaching commitment in Year 1. We are hoping to have this completed by the February half term and will keep you updated once an appointment has been made. It is our hope that there will be sufficient time to allow a transition period between Mrs Antrobus and the new classteacher before 14th March 2025. Please do keep Mrs Antrobus and our recruitment process in your prayers.

We have also appointed **Miss Maria Valenda** as an additional midday assistant (MDA) and she is now working every lunchtime to help supervise and safeguard our children during this very busy period of the school day. I am sure you will welcome Miss Valenda as she embarks on her new role ably supported by Mrs Dansey our Senior Midday Assistant.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: Primary School Admissions – September 2025

For those of you with younger children due to start school in EYFS/Reception in September 2025 now is the time to make your application. This applies to all parents of children born during the period 1st September 2020 to 31st August 2021. You **MUST** now apply for primary school places as the closing date is **Wednesday 15th January 2025**. Please apply online by visiting www.essex.gov.uk/admissions

ACL Community & Family Learning

Yesterday we shared with you (via Parent Hub) some exciting **FREE** parent/carer sessions (mainly online) from the Community & Family Learning Team to support families. These included sessions on:

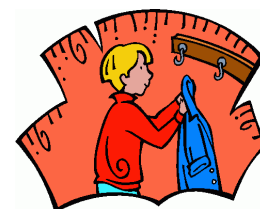


- Children's Anxiety
- Raising Boys & Girls
- Talking So Children Will Listen
- Zones of Regulation

Parenting is not an easy job and all of us can benefit from advice, guidance and suggestions of how to tackle things differently. If you are interested in getting involved with these opportunities then follow the links in the flyers distributed via Parent Hub, or alternatively contact ACL Community & Family Learning at aclfamilylearning@essex.gov.uk

REMINDER: Coats!

With the cold, wintry weather arriving recently and the odd flurry of snow it is yet another chance 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.



I would also point out that the Year 6 Leavers' hoodie is not a substitute for a coat.

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.

Essex & Thames SCITT

We are delighted to be continuing our partnership with the Essex & Thames SCITT. This partnership involves the school working with Essex & Thames Primary SCITT to help train and produce high quality teachers. The continuing improvement of pupil progress and the well-being of children are at the heart of this collaboration and inform all aspects of the training. There is also a close relationship between the SCITT, Anglia Ruskin University and the school which provides an ideal environment for the exchange of ideas that informs practice across the partnership. As part of this work we have welcomed two SCITT students this term, **Miss Emma Critchell & Mr Dylan Boyle**. They will both be on placement with us for the spring and summer terms. Mr Boyle will be based in Key Stage 1 and work closely alongside Mrs Knight in 2K; Miss Critchell will be based in Key Stage 2 and work closely alongside Mrs Sprake in 6S. I am sure you will join me in welcoming them both to St Thomas' Primary School and wish them every success on their placement with us.

Curriculum Information Leaflets for Parents – Spring Term 2025

Hopefully by now you will have received, via Parent Hub, a copy of the new Spring Term 2025 curriculum information guide for parents and carers. These are produced by teaching staff as a guide and indication of the themes and topics being covered this term. Please take the time to read this through and discuss it with your child. We hope it will give you some ideas about how you can support your child's learning and homework. We would highlight and promote the opportunities to research curriculum themes at the local library, via the internet or by visiting a museum. The most important thing is to talk to your child and find out what they have been doing and learning. Copies of this guide are now available via the school website by clicking on the appropriate Early Years, Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2 boxes at the bottom of the home page. If there are any aspects of the work your child is covering which you feel you may be able to offer help or advice with then please approach your child's classteacher. Thank you for your support!

Year 3 Swimming Lessons



Lessons for the children in Year 3 (3CA & 3B) will begin on Friday 7th February 2025. I would like to remind parents that we very much rely on your payments to cover the cost of swimming lessons of **£54 per child**. In recent years we have seen the cost of pool hire rise at St. Helen's as well as the cost of swimming teachers increase substantially. I hope you will agree that this remains excellent value for money. If there are reasons why your child cannot take part in swimming lessons this must be discussed with your child's classteacher or the School Office. I would like to remind you that swimming forms part of the National Curriculum for PE at Key Stage 2 and is not optional.

Please ensure your child has the correct swimming kit in school on Friday's. Please could we encourage you to make a prompt payment via our online payment system www.parentpay.com. If you feel you may have difficulty in paying this amount and would like to discuss this confidentially then please arrange to speak with Mrs Lawrence in the School Office. Thank you for your support and understanding in this matter.

May I remind you that all children have to wear a suitable costume for swimming (no beach wear!) and a swimming hat. Swimming hats are available via ParentPay at a cost of **£4.00**. It is a really good idea to write your child's name on their hat in large letters in a thick permanent marker as this helps the swimming teachers to call their names and also reduces the risk of it becoming lost.

School Eucharists

The Eucharists for this term have been communicated via the 'Dates for the Diary' sheet and are also detailed below.

The **EYFS/Reception, Year 1, Year 2 & Year 3 Ash Wednesday Eucharist** (including class ashing) will take place on Wednesday 5th March 2025 at 9:15a.m. in the KS1 Hall.

The **Year 4, Year 5 & Year 6 Ash Wednesday Eucharist** (including ashing) will take place on Wednesday 5th March 2025 at 10:45a.m. in the KS2 Hall.

The **Lent Eucharists** will take place on:

- Thursday 3rd April 2025 – Reception/EYFS & Key Stage 1 at 9:15a.m. in the KS1 Hall.
- Friday 4th April 2025 – Key Stage 2 at 9:30a.m. at St Thomas of Canterbury Church.

I do hope you will be able to join us for these services.

Education Sunday 2025

Fr. Mark and I have met this week to discuss the arrangements for Education Sunday.

Our annual church service to celebrate Education Sunday will take place at St. Thomas' Church on **Sunday 26th January 2025** starting at **10:00a.m.** This is a very special service of thanksgiving and a chance to offer thanks and prayers for the life and work of our primary school and all the people associated with them. We hope as many children and families as possible will be able to attend this very special occasion and come together as a school and church community. All children attending must wear their school uniform and will be expected to sit with their classteacher and other class members at the front of the church. Parents/carers are more than welcome to stay and sit in other areas of the church for the service.



In order for us to get a clear indication as to how many children to expect and how many seats to reserve in the church, we would be very grateful if you could indicate with a note confirming your attendance in your child's home school diary. Thank you.

Finally....

We are looking forward to welcoming some important visitors to our school next week.

On Tuesday we are looking forward to meeting Georgina Brown from St Francis Hospice. She is coming to talk to all of the children across the primary school during collective worship about the work that they do and how our fundraising across this academic year will make a valuable contribution to their charity. St Francis Hospice is the children's chosen charity for the 2024-2025 academic year.

Also on Tuesday, we are looking forward to welcoming Carrie Prior - Director of Education for the Diocese of Chelmsford. Mrs Prior is coming to visit us as a fairly 'new' primary school and see the school in action across EYFS, KS1 and KS2.



News from the Parish Church of St Thomas of Canterbury

Fr. Mark writes:

This Sunday marks the end of our Christmas celebrations as we celebrate the Baptism of Christ in the River Jordan. When John the Baptist baptised him the voice of the Father proclaimed Jesus to be His beloved Son and the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, descended upon Jesus. This powerful moment marks the beginning of Jesus' public ministry as he initially spent time in the wilderness before calling his disciples and began his travels as he preached about the coming of God's kingdom. All are welcome as we gather for worship as follows

08.00 Said Mass (lasting about 45 minutes)

10.00 Sung Mass (lasting about 75 minutes)

18.00 Choral Evensong (lasting around 50 minutes)

In the week that follows;

Wednesday mornings are always 'Cake and a Cuppa' when friends old and new gather to catch up on the news and enjoy a slice of delicious homemade cake. This runs from 10.00 to 12.00 and some will stay on for the 12.15 Mass.

On Friday we have a 'Crafty Fridays' group when there is an opportunity to undertake various craft activities with the chance for a natter. This runs from 10.00 to 12.00.

Sunday the 19th of January is the Second Sunday of Epiphany and we gather for worship as follows.

08.00 Said Mass (lasting about 45 minutes)

10.00 Sung Mass (lasting about 75 minutes)

18.00 Choral Evensong (lasting around 50 minutes)

We shall be running a new cycle of Alpha on Thursday afternoons from the 23rd of January meeting at 13.30 in the Church Centre to the side of St Thomas' Church. This is an excellent way to ask some of those massive questions we have about life, faith, God and suffering. Each session starts with light refreshments before we watch a video and have time for discussion and questions. We will be finished before 15.00 leaving plenty of time to get down for school pickup. This time is designed to suit parents at the school and to help you answer some of the questions that your children either already have or are likely to have as they continue their time within our special church school, so I do commend this opportunity to you. Please note this is a free activity and there is no charge for attending.

Sunday the 26th of January is Education Sunday when we look forward to welcoming you all to church as we give thanks for all those involved in education, and allow the children to get involved in leading our worship together.

As you can see there is a lot going on already as we embark on this new term in school. Please do keep up to date with all communications sent out via the school with Parent Hub and the school website being your best sources of information.

Please continue to hold the life and work of our primary school in your thoughts and prayers.

Have a wonderful 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.