



NEWSLETTER

7th February 2025

With another cold snap on its way, the weather reminds us that we are certainly in the season of winter despite it being called the spring term! We are now approaching the February half term which also signals the approximate half way mark of the academic year. Many of us will look back on what we have achieved since the beginning of September, as well as what we hope to go on to achieve before finishing for the summer holiday in July. There is still so much to look forward to and we really do appreciate your support and working in partnership with us for the benefit of all the children in our school.

Eco-Committee

All of us will be aware of the regular reminders about how our world is being affected by climate change and challenges on sustainability. We often talk to the children about the concept of stewardship and how we are commanded to look after and respect God's creation. With constant warnings about how human activities detrimentally impact on our world and resources it is a message we cannot afford to ignore.

I am delighted to inform you that we have now introduced a new Eco Committee with our children in Key Stage 2, to focus on what we can do as a school community to be more sustainable and eco-friendly. This committee of 'Eco-Warriors' has met this week and are already setting out what they wish to achieve to make St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School more eco-aware. This morning in collective worship we were delighted to announce their names. They are:

3B – George Moxley
3CA – Timmie Akinlade
4M – Hudson Medland
4TW – Darcy Dallaway
4B – Claudia Deitch
5S – Joseff Rees
5DC – Matilda Bannister
6S – Ellie Palmer
6M – Ollie Benns
6G – William Penfold



I am sure you will join me in congratulating these children on their new positions of responsibility. They will soon be wearing our new 'Eco-Warrior' badges (currently delayed in the post!!) and getting to work in and across our school.

Do You Have Time To Spare?

One of the most important skills we learn at school, a skill for life long learning, is being able to read! We have many confident and avid readers across the primary school and our two school libraries are a credit to our learning environment and stocked with rich and varied texts.

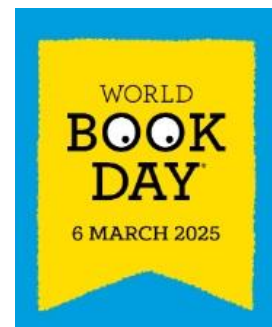
For our younger children in EYFS and Key Stage 1, reading on a regular (daily) basis is so important. Practising their key word vocabulary, phonic skills and decoding are all things that take determination and focus. I am aware that many parents/carers support their children with reading at home and this is greatly valued and appreciated. However, for some children they need more opportunities to read to an adult and we are hoping that there may be some parents/carers who could spare an hour a week to come in to school and hear the children read in the classroom. This opportunity would be predominantly in EYFS and Key Stage 1 (Year 1 & 2) and be in the afternoon. No prior experience is necessary, just a willingness to sit with a child and hear them read offering support and encouragement.

If this is something you feel you could commit to on a regular basis then please contact the School Office with your details and when you would be available to volunteer in school. Volunteers would be subject to a DBS safeguarding check before undertaking this role. I do hope some of you will give consideration to this very worthwhile opportunity.

World Book Day 2025

I am sure many of you will have noticed from the dates issued back in January that **Thursday 6th March 2025** is World Book Day 2025. We also sent out further details on 23rd January with a letter from Mrs Coughtrey about the exciting events taking place across the course of this day. As we have done in previous years, we are hoping to be able to celebrate this day by inviting your children to dress up! This is a day devoted to celebrating good books and literature and I hope we can do this in style! This year we are linking World Book Day to British Science Week...so there is a decidedly scientific theme!

The children will be undertaking lots of science and book related activities across the course of World Book Day, and to get them in the spirit we are asking them to come to school dressed as their favourite scientist or a character from a science fiction book (or anything with a science theme!). The emphasis is once again on simple costumes and you do not need to go to great lengths or vast expense to provide a costume for this day. The children can wear their costumes to school and it would be even better if they could bring a copy of the book from which their character comes. Please bear in mind that the children will be completing normal lessons throughout the day so the costume needs to be practical for school. For the same reason we ask that the children do not wear hair dye or make up. The staff are going to join in with the fun and festivities and I am sure we are all looking forward to seeing what costumes and characters emerge! At the end of the day they will come home with their World Book Day voucher which they can exchange at a local book shop for one of the World Book Day special titles or money off a full-priced book.



Have Your Say on New Essex Air Quality Strategy

Families across Essex are being encouraged to share their feedback on a new draft [Essex Air Quality Strategy](#).

Air pollution is the largest environmental risk to public health in the UK, with children particularly susceptible to the health impacts.

Many sources of air pollution also release greenhouse gases and reducing pollution also helps tackle climate change.

The new strategy sets out actions to improve air quality and help reduce the impacts of air pollution on people's health.

Have your say on the draft strategy by completing the [public consultation survey](#) before 2nd March 2025.

SCHOOL CLOSED - Non-Pupil Professional Development and Training Day

Please remember that Monday 24th February 2025 is a designated non-pupil professional development and training day. **The school is closed to the children.**

This will mean that the children will return for the second half of the spring term on Tuesday 25th February 2025 – don't be late!!

News from St Thomas' Church contributed by Fr Mark

This Sunday we begin to look forward to the season of Lent as this Sunday is known as the Fourth Sunday before Lent. It is still in what we call Ordinary Time, so green vestments are worn when we celebrate the Eucharist and the church is lit up with green lights. In our readings, we reflect on what it means to be called by Jesus as we hear the story of the call of Jesus' first disciples as Jesus calls them to put aside their nets as they are to become fishers of men. 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 Thursdays, our toddler group meets in the church at 10.30 for a short story and a few songs before moving into the hall for playtime until 12.00

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 16th of February is the Third Sunday before Lent 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)

The toddler group does not meet during half term but the usual round of daily worship continues and the week concludes with Sunday the 23rd of February which is the Second Sunday before Lent and we gather for worship as follows.

08.00 Said Mass (lasting about 45 minutes)
10.00 Sung Family Mass (lasting about 60 minutes)
18.00 Choral Evensong (lasting around 50 minutes)

Advance Notice: St David's Day



We will soon be reaching the second of our House feast days for this academic year. On Friday 28th February 2025 we will be celebrating **St David**, with the actual Feast Day being on Saturday 1st March!

On Friday 28th February we are inviting all the children who are in St David's House to wear non-school uniform and dress in their House colour which is **YELLOW**. This opportunity is only for children in St David's House as the other Houses will get their opportunity later in the academic year – later in March for St. Patrick and April for St George. We do hope that all the St David's children encouraged by their House Captains will take pride in marking this event. In preparation, the children in St David's House may like to research some facts about the life of St David and share it with their classteacher.

Finally....

Looking further ahead we will be holding school Eucharists on Wednesday 5th March with Fr. Mark, as we begin the season of Lent. Our Ash Wednesday Eucharists will be held in the school halls. Parents/carers are very welcome to attend.

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

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

There will also be the imposition of ashes for those that wish to receive the sign of the cross on their forehead.

As we think about preparing for Easter, I am pleased to inform you that once again we will be linking up with St Thomas of Canterbury Church to offer the opportunity to purchase Easter Eggs from the Meaningful Chocolate Company. Please look out for a separate Parent Hub message with information and pricings!



THE EGG THAT SHARES THE EASTER STORY



Easter Blessing Bars
(from £3)



Fun Pack
(from £6.00)

Original
(from £5.50)



Dark (from £6.50)



NOW PLASTIC FREE

New 24 page Easter story-activity book



PALM OIL FREE

All Real Easter Eggs come with an Easter story in the box. The stories range from simple guides to 24 page activity book versions.

So, buy a Real Easter Egg this spring and encourage others to give one to their loved ones, a school or sponsor a food bank donation.

Where to buy

The 2025 Real Easter Egg will not be available in any supermarkets. The full range can be ordered at www.realeasteregg.co.uk or by calling 01925 877004.

Out of the 80 million Easter eggs sold in this part of the world every year, The Real Easter Egg is the only one which has a copy of the Easter story in the box, is made of Fairtrade chocolate and which supports charitable projects.

The Original and Dark eggs include a 24 page Easter story-activity book. They are Palm Oil and plastic free, and include a competition.

The Fun Pack has an Easter story activity poster and 6 milk chocolate eggs.

The Easter Blessing bar features 'The Resurrection' image. On the back it says 'May God Bless you this Easter and fill you with peace.'

See the full shop list or order at www.realeasteregg.co.uk

I wish you all a wonderful weekend – see you on Monday!

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.