

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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



NEWSLETTER

2nd May 2025



We now find ourselves in the new month of May and the weather has certainly not disappointed this week, reminding us that we are in the summer term! It has also been an opportunity to test out our new air conditioning in some areas of the school which really suffer from solar gain (in other words it gets hot!) This has provided much more comfortable learning environments for staff and children alike. As we continue to 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. Earlier this week we were pleased to be able to issue the 'Dates for the Diary' sheet detailing the events and activities taking place this term. Please keep it somewhere safe and refer to it as necessary. Please remember that all newsletters and key communication from the school appear on the school website (www.stthomaspri.org) and are also sent electronically via Parent Hub.

This half term (which is very short!) 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 is wonderful to see all the children returning after the Easter break in their summer uniforms with some lovely new, crisp white polo shirts on display. By the end of this 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 home school diary.

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 home school diary.



Waterbottles

It is very important that children have access to clean drinking water throughout the day particularly at this time of year when we start to experience warmer weather. We encourage your children to bring in a waterbottle to school which encourages them to drink and replace their fluids as the day goes on. Children are also given access to drinking water at school to refill their waterbottles once they are empty. However recently we have had a number of problems with water being spilt in the classroom mainly because some children do not have waterbottles with a sports cap. The school policy is that all waterbottles brought into school must have a sports cap to prevent such accidents happening. If your child does not have this type of waterbottle can I please ask you to change it as soon as possible. Thank you for your support in this matter.

Just in case you missed it...It's a boy!



I am delighted to share with you the wonderful news and safe arrival of Eric Christopher Luke Antrobus who was born in the early hours of 12th April 2025, weighing a very healthy 8lbs 8oz. Both Mrs Antrobus and her new son are doing very well and enjoying getting used to being a family of five, alongside her husband and older brother and sister. I am sure you will join me in congratulating Mr & Mrs Antrobus on their new addition to the family and wish them continued good health and happiness as they begin a new chapter in the Antrobus household! I am sure it will not be long until we get to meet Eric in school.

Staffing Update

After 11 years at the school **Mrs Velta Larter** has tendered her resignation as a Learning Support Assistant (LSA) and will leave St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School at the end of this half term (23rd May). I know this has been a particularly difficult decision for Mrs Larter, filled with mixed emotions after such a long and successful association with our school both as a parent and a member of staff. Mrs Larter will be moving on to a new role and continuing her work as a pharmacy technician.

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

Year 6 SATs Week – 12th May 2025

As we start 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.

The week of the **12th May 2025**, is probably one of the most important weeks of the year for our children in Year 6. Throughout the course of the week the children in Year 6 will be undertaking statutory assessment tests (SATs) in grammar, punctuation and spelling (GPS), reading as well as arithmetic and maths reasoning papers to measure their attainment and progress across Key Stage 2. It can seem quite a daunting and anxious time for everyone involved but I am very confident that the children have been well prepared, through daily high quality teaching and learning, to tackle these assessments with a wealth of skills, knowledge and understanding.



As a Primary School we work exceptionally hard to prepare our Year 6 children for these tests. I am confident that the staff and children will approach SATs Week, 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.

Upper Key Stage 2 – Confirmation Classes

We now have **20** of our Upper KS2 children who will be starting confirmation preparation classes on Thursday 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 20th July 2025 and will receive the sacrament of confirmation from Bishop Luke, the new Bishop of Richborough. 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

Earlier this week you will have received via Parent Hub a copy of the new clubs and extra curricular timetable for the **Summer Term 2025**. 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.

We Are a Forest School!

Forest School is a child-centred inspirational learning process, that offers opportunities for holistic growth through regular sessions. It is a long-term program that supports play, exploration and supported risk taking. It develops confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting.

Forest School has a developmental ethos shared by thousands of trained practitioners around the world, who are constantly developing their learning styles and skills to support new and imaginative learners. Its roots reach back to the open-air culture, seen as a way of life in Scandinavia where Forest School began. It arrived in the UK in 1993 and has grown from strength to strength since then.



I am delighted to inform you that we now have three members of our teaching staff who have qualified as Forest School Leaders – **Mrs Coughtrey, Mrs Knight & Mr Beales**. This has taken a significant amount of time, training, studying and assessment over the last 12-18 months. I am sure you will join me in congratulating them on their qualification and what this will bring to our school and curriculum offer.

Forest School helps and facilitates more than knowledge-gathering, it helps learners develop socially, emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectually. It creates a safe, non-judgemental nurturing environment for learners to try stuff out and take risks. Forest School inspires a deep and meaningful connection to the world and an understanding of how a learner fits within it. Our approach to risk means that learners constantly expand on their abilities by solving real-world issues, building self-belief and resilience. We believe that risk is more than just potential for physical harm, but a more holistic thing, there are risks in everything we do, and we grow by overcoming them. Forest School therefore, helps participants to become, healthy, resilient, creative and independent learners.

Watch this space for more details about how your children will experience and enjoy Forest School as part of their learning journey!!

Moments Matter, Attendance Counts

**MOMENTS
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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.

Finally....

You have received (via Parent Hub) the new **EYFS, Key Stage 1, Lower and Upper Key Stage 2 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!

I do hope that many of you were able to attend the '**2 Johns' e-safety webinar** yesterday evening. The session certainly provided valuable guidance on how to protect your child online, recognise potential risks, and encourage healthy digital habits. It was a fantastic opportunity to gain expert advice on keeping our children safe while they navigate the online world. Thank you to those who attended.

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.

I am sure I don't need to remind you that we have a long bank holiday weekend ahead of us! Enjoy the extra day – see you on **TUESDAY!**



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