

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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



NEWSLETTER

18th July 2025

Over the past few weeks we have been treated to a showcase of talents across our primary school. Last week we hosted our EYFS & Key Stage 1 Summer Concerts which saw all our younger classes demonstrating and sharing their musical talents whilst performing in front of a live audience. Those of you who were able to attend will have been treated to a summer medley of songs, some new and others familiar. We also had a stirring performance of 'One More Step Along the World I Go' as a finale! It was clear to see from the smile on the children's faces what joy this event brought to them and ultimately to us! Thank you to all those who attended and for your generous donations towards our retiring collection for St Francis Hospice. Across the three performances we raised **£464.26**



Towards the end of June, our Key Stage 2 children also had the opportunity to bring us musical entertainment at another wonderful concert, with our Key Stage 1 choir also making an appearance. The quality of music on display was awe inspiring, included a range of instruments and a varied mix of musical genres. It was a pleasure to be part of the audience and marvel at the dedication and accomplishment that many hours of practice and rehearsal have produced. At our retiring collection we raised a further **£317.47**

Earlier this month it was the turn of Year 6, who highly entertained us with two stunning performances of 'Aladdin Trouble'. The acting was superb, the singing wonderful, the props and scenery professionally produced and the collaborative team ethos was evidently on display. It made us laugh (and groan!), it made us smile and we saw gifts and talents which had not necessarily been evident before. Again, thank you to our audience members for attending and for your support with this production. Over the course of our two performances we raised **£364.54**

Finally, at our 'Mind, Body and Soul Charity Day' organised by our superb CATS reps we raised an outstanding **£2553.70** in donations and sponsorship. That means that along with the earlier charity fundraising events this academic year we have raised a total of **£7,983.42** for St Francis Hospice – you are all amazing! Thank you to everyone who has supported these events.

We have certainly seen the addition of donating via our linked event specific QR codes as an added bonus – no excuse for the person who never has any cash on them!!

REMINDER: School Dinners – September 2025

Following a meeting of the Finance and Premises Committee of the Governing Body of St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School, a decision has been made to increase the daily cost of school meals from September 2025.

As you will be fully aware, the cost of food, fuel, transportation and catering staff pay has increased in recent years. After reviewing our catering trading accounts and factoring in these increased costs it has been decided that school meals will increase to **£2.69** per day (£13.45 a week) from September 2025.

For parents/carers of children in EYFS and Key Stage 1, this is for information only as your children will still be eligible for universal infant free school meals as set out by the Department for Education (DfE). However, for parents/carers of Year 2 children moving in to Key Stage 2 and for the rest of the Primary School parent/carer community this will impact on you from the beginning of the new academic year.

Please be rest assured that this decision has not been taken lightly but we cannot operate our catering trading accounts at a loss. Please remember that once your child moves to Key Stage 2 you may be eligible for benefits related free school meals. For further information please contact the School Office for further details or visit the Essex County Council website.

ADVANCE NOTICE: When we return to school on Wednesday 3rd September 2025 we will be starting on **WEEK 1** of the menu cycle.

Working Together to Improve School Attendance

St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School is dedicated to supporting strong attendance for our children so that they receive an excellent education. The benefits of being in school are numerous. However, we are still experiencing disrupted attendance habits, and many schools including us are facing more challenges than ever in supporting children to be in school. We are working exceptionally hard in response to this challenge. This includes following the [working together to improve school attendance](#) guidance which became a statutory requirement from September 2024.

Our whole school attendance target for this academic year was 96%. Sadly we have missed this target with an end of year outcome of **94.5%**. This is very disappointing and even more so when you look at how this is broken down by year group:

YEAR GROUP	ATTENDANCE RATE
Reception/EYFS	93.2%
Year 1	93.2%
Year 2	94.0%
Year 3	95.6%
Year 4	95.1%
Year 5	94.6%
Year 6	94.3%

We understand that different factors are now influencing decision making for some parents, carers and pupils around whether a child or young person attends school. Starting to influence pupil, parent and carer behaviours is one part of our strategy in tackling this very difficult issue. We also know that pupils fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. We want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success. We also know that **you** as parent/carers can have a significant effect on reducing absences and we would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that your child attends school every day so that they can get the best possible outcomes.

In the new academic year we will be working with **Aquinas School Attendance Provisions** who will be undertaking school visits each half term to track and monitor our attendance data. They will also be conducting face-to-face school-based attendance meetings with parents/carers of children who we deem to have concerns about their irregular school attendance. Aquinas will offer support first based strategies to help improve poor absence rates, before exploring more legislative options including the issuing of penalty notices. Look out for more information in September 2025.

Confirmation Service

This Sunday (20th July) we have **22** of our Upper Key Stage 2 children and one member of staff (Mrs Burrus) being confirmed across one of two confirmation services that are being held at St Thomas of Canterbury Church. Owing to the large number of adults and children who had been prepared to receive the holy sacrament of confirmation the service has been split between a 10:00a.m. service and another at 12 noon.

Bishop Luke, Bishop of Richborough, will be making the occasion feel very special and I am sure will make each and every candidate feel at ease whilst also experiencing the gift of the Holy Spirit. I would like to thank Fr. Mark for hosting the confirmation classes in school each week. If you are able, please do come along to support and pray for our children and their families.

End of Term Eucharist Services

It was wonderful to welcome so many parents/carers and other visitors to our end of academic year Eucharist for the children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 this morning. It was a very special act of worship, with the children in fine voice and a fitting way to bring the academic year to a successful conclusion.

Next week as is tradition, the **Key Stage 2** children will be going to St. Thomas of Canterbury Church for our Leavers' Eucharist on **Monday 21st July 2025** starting promptly at 9:30a.m. to celebrate the passing of another school year. We will also be saying goodbye and good luck to our Year 6 children as their time at St. Thomas' draws to a close. This service will also include the presentation of Bibles to Year 6 on behalf of the school and the parish. I hope many of you will be able to join us for this special occasion. If you are able to help walk the children to and from the church your support would be greatly appreciated – please speak to your child's classteacher.

Exercise Books

As we draw close to the end of the academic year we have arranged to send your children's exercise books home so you can share in their successes and congratulate them on their progress and hard work across the year. We will continue to retain a very small sample of children's English and Mathematics books (with the exception of Year 6) as these will act as a valuable source of evidence for your child's new classteacher and year group teams.

Of those books we retain, it is our intention to keep hold of these exercise books until the end of the first half term by which time we will have created enough work and evidence in the children's new books to be able to send them home. You will receive these books towards the end of October when they will be sent home via their new classteacher.

We hope you will support us in these arrangements which will assist us in ensuring the transition process is as supportive and seamless as possible. The information which can be gathered from these exercise books will ensure our children have a positive start to the new academic year and we are able to support them in realising their full potential.

End of term in the Sacred Garden



This week we have had 2 more lunchtime Prayer Space sessions in the Sacred Garden, one for Year 3 and 4 and one for Year 5 and 6. Children were able to explore the theme of 'Change' – what with a school year ending and a new one soon to begin. Children could go on a walk and consider what changes are coming up at school and at home and reflect on how they feel about those changes and indicate that with coloured pegs. Children also reflected on the past year and what they would like to celebrate about it – this was displayed on bunting bringing lovely colour to the garden area. Butterflies were made

to think about 'New Year, New you?' – children thought about what they would like to keep the same about themselves, what they'd like to improve and what would they be brave enough to try if they knew nothing would go wrong. It made a beautiful display of butterflies. There was also a 'Life Ring' so children could pray for help that they need or pray for others who need help. Each zone had a choice of a prayer or a thought to reflect on.

Some of the Prayerfully Learning Together focus group children in Year 5 were assistants (along with a couple of volunteers from local churches) and did a fantastic job running these activities. The Year 3 and 4 session was well attended and very lively, the Year 5 and 6 session had a very peaceful, calming atmosphere and even spontaneous singing of worship songs were initiated by some children which created a beautiful atmosphere!

Pupil comments:

"I loved this activity as it gave me a moment to reflect and express my emotions with God."

"It made me feel more calm about it and the changes."

"I felt good about the changes because it is a part of life and you have to overcome them!"

"I felt that you can share your message with God without speaking."

"I have learned to face other people's fear as well as mine today."



Finally....

On Thursday 10th July 2025 the Year 6 children hosted their annual Charity Fair. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the children and staff in Year 6 for planning, organising and delivering such a fun afternoon for our whole school community. All the children who took part had an opportunity to try out the activities and stalls on offer and thanks to your support we raised a further **£446.54** for St Francis Hospice.

As we prepare to bring the academic year to a close and enjoy a well-deserved summer holiday, I would like to remind you that we are saying goodbye and good luck to a number of longstanding members of staff. **Mrs Anita Lawrence, Mrs Emily Gore and Mrs Anna Dunn** are all leaving our school community at the end of this term. Within school we have had various opportunities for both children and staff to celebrate and mark their long service and say thank you for everything they have contributed to the life and work of the school. All of them will remain in our thoughts and prayers as they prepare to move on to new ventures and experiences.

This week has been **Challenge Week** across the primary school and I hope that your children have enjoyed sharing with you some of the activities and challenges they have faced as they have moved around the different classrooms. The theme for this year was based around sustainability. I would like to say a huge thank you to all the staff who have helped plan and organise this event and recognise the time and effort that goes in to providing this opportunity at the end of a long and tiring academic year.

This afternoon the winners from EYFS, KS1 and KS2 were announced!

Congratulations to **RB** (Mr Beales) who were the EYFS winners.

The Key Stage 1 winners were **2MP** (Mrs Pritchard)

The Key Stage 2 winners were **5DC** (Mrs Dunn & Mrs Cassidy)



REMINDER: We still have 2 days left of the academic year so we look forward to seeing you on Monday (21st) and Tuesday (22nd) next week!!

Wishing you and your family a well-deserved, safe and happy summer holiday! We look forward to welcoming you back for the start of the 2025-2026 academic year on **Wednesday 3rd September 2025.**

Thank you for your continued prayers and support. God bless!

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:

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