

# ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

*"Realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community"*



# NEWSLETTER

19<sup>th</sup> May 2023



Yesterday was **Ascension Day** - for 40 days after his resurrection on Easter Sunday, the Bible says that Jesus travelled and preached with his apostles, preparing them for his departure from Earth. Ascension Day marks the moment Jesus literally ascended into heaven before his disciples, at the village of Bethany, near Jerusalem. The Book of Acts provides the longest account of Christ's farewell to his disciples, bidding them to preach the word of God and assuring them of his eventual return for the Second Coming.

*"After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight,"* the book says.

*"They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven'."*

Next week we will be turning our attentions to preparing for the feast of Pentecost when the Apostles and other disciples received the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. To mark this very special occasion we will be celebrating our Lower School (9:15a.m.) and Upper School (10:45a.m.) Pentecost Eucharists in the school hall next Friday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2023. All are welcome to attend and be part of this special act of worship – we look forward to welcoming you.

As always, thank you for your continued support, patience and prayers.

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION: Length of the School Week**

The Government White Paper 'Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child' sets out expectations that state-funded mainstream schools should deliver a school week of at least 32.5 hours by September 2023. Although many aspects of this White Paper have been abandoned since its publication in March 2022 this expectation still remains and state-funded mainstream schools currently offering a school week of below 32.5 hours should work towards increasing their hours to provide at least 32.5 hours by September 2023 at the latest.

The Governing Body of St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School have reviewed this expectation and also determined that our current school week is only 31 hours 40 minutes – falling short of the 32.5 hours a week by 50 minutes per week. The 32.5 hour minimum expectation includes the time in each day from the official start of the school day (i.e. morning registration) to the official end to the compulsory school day (i.e. official home time).

Therefore from September 2023 the school day for all children at both St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Infant and Junior Schools will be extended to 3:25p.m. everyday. This includes the EYFS Reception classes which currently finish before both KS1 and KS2. There is **NO CHANGE** to the morning routine and start of the school day arrangements but to repeat, the school day will finish for **ALL** children at **3:25p.m.**

This change is as a direct result of Government and Department for Education (DfE) guidance and we are communicating this with you now so you have time to prepare for this change from September 2023.

Thank you for your support and understanding.



## Premises Development – Roofing Project

This week myself and Mrs Forder (School Business Manager) have been involved in meetings with regard to an exciting and much needed re-roofing project which will be undertaken across both St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Infant & Junior Schools.

The schools have successfully secured significant capital funding via the Diocese of Chelmsford to undertake a full and extensive re-roofing project of the entire school estate. As you can imagine this is an incredibly costly project and we are extremely grateful to have secured funding for this project via the VASCA scheme administered by the Diocese.

It is anticipated that scaffolding for this project will be erected over the half term break (29<sup>th</sup> May – 2<sup>nd</sup> June) with works commencing soon after. It is very likely that after half term there may need to be some changes to accessing the school site and additional controlled hazards to be aware of. As the project develops we will communicate any further details and changes to routine as and when they arise.

The impact on children's learning will be minimal and we will be working very closely with the Diocese, surveyors and contractors to keep any disruption to a minimum. The majority of the work will be completed during the summer closure period but some preparatory work will be undertaken in the final half term of this academic year.

The school roof is long past its lifespan and we have had to manage 'issues' with the roof throughout the year. This project will not only remove these issues but smarten up the school estate as well as provide the opportunity to be more eco-friendly in terms of improving both insulation and controlling heat gain.

We would ask for your support in ensuring we keep everyone safe especially when the parent community come on to the school site at the end of the school day. Please ensure children and younger siblings are supervised at all times and kept clear of fenced off areas and contractor compounds.

## REMINDER: Healthy Snacks

We are proud to be a healthy school and promote healthy lifestyles and diet including participation in The Daily Mile™. We encourage you to send in a healthy snack for your child to eat at morning break. The vast majority of children do bring in a piece of fruit or healthy cereal bar. However recently we have observed a few children who are not eating a healthy snack! Please can we ask you to support us in this matter and remember that under **no circumstances** should children be bringing in crisps, chocolate, chocolate covered snack bars or sweets. It is also worth pointing out that a number of fruit based snack products marketed in the main supermarkets contain a very high sugar content and are probably not as healthy as you might think! The classteachers will be reminding the children about what constitutes a healthy snack.

Can I also remind you that we have a number of children with severe allergies to nuts so please **do not** send in any snack items that obviously contain nuts. Thank you for your co-operation.

## RHS School Gardening Award – Level 2

Further to our previous communication I am delighted to share the news that St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School has recently been awarded Level 2 of the Royal Horticultural Society School Gardening Awards. The awards are designed to facilitate schools turning their gardens into a valuable learning resource by working towards achievable goals. We have demonstrated that we have been asking the children what they want to grow, we have mastered the skills to prepare the soil, plant, sow and water. We can use hand tools safely and we have started to grow some plants.

Congratulations to all the staff and children who are involved in the Pioneers Gardening Club in achieving this prestigious award!!



## Sporting Success

On Tuesday we participated in the Shenfield SSP Year 3 and Year 4 Tennis Competition held at the Brentwood Lawn Tennis Club. Pictured below is our team who finished in 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall and are pictured proudly wearing their bronze medals! Not only did they medal but were also commended on their support for each other and their support and respect for their opposition. It was wonderful to see them exemplifying our school character values. Congratulations!!



Congratulations also goes to our girls' football team who took part in the St Helen's Invitational 6-a-side Tournament on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Our B Team performed well in the league part of the tournament and showed good teamwork and resilience making us very proud of their attitude and participation.

The A Team won all their league matches without conceding a single goal! They went on to the final where they narrowly missed out losing 1-0 to St Helen's. The team proudly returned with the runners-up cup and certificates.

## Finally....

Next week is our final week of this half term which seems to have raced by since our return on 18<sup>th</sup> April. Thankfully the weather is beginning to feel more 'summer-like' and the temperature is rising!

Half term is from Monday 29<sup>th</sup> May to Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023. Once it arrives, have a super half term week, stay safe and I look forward to seeing you all again on **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023**.

**Mr D. Moran**  
**Headteacher**



**And...** please remember if you have any questions or queries or comments feel free to contact us: [admin@stthomasjr.essex.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stthomasjr.essex.sch.uk)