

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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



NEWSLETTER

26th January 2024



I cannot quite believe that we are coming to the end of January. The first half of this rather short spring term is racing by and in just a few weeks we will be nearing the half way mark of the academic year!!

This Sunday, 28th January, we will be coming together as a school community at St Thomas of Canterbury Church to celebrate **Education Sunday**. 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. It is also an opportunity to outwardly demonstrate and strengthen our partnership with our parish church, the clergy and wider church family, as well as share some of our work with the gathered congregation. During the service there will be presentations of work from EYFS/Key Stage 1, Lower School (Year 3 & 4) and Upper School (Year 5 & 6). This year we have tied in our presentations around the theme of 'Number'. This is to celebrate and support the Essex Year of Number which is a county wide initiative this year having replaced the Essex Year of Reading. The children and staff have been creative in thinking about how they can use numbers in the Bible to give it a theological flavour! Do come along to see what they have prepared!!

We hope as many children and families as possible will be able to attend. Please remember, we are asking all children attending to wear their school uniform and will expect them to sit with their classteacher and other class members at the front of the church. Parents, carers and other family members are of course very welcome to stay and sit in the other areas of the church for the service. As an added incentive, there will be the usual Education Sunday Annual Bake-Off Competition. Cakes will be judged and on sale after the service.

Staffing Update

From our previous newsletters you will be aware that **Miss Elizabeth Berner** is pregnant and expecting her first child in early May 2024. Miss Berner has now indicated that she will be starting her maternity leave at the beginning of the summer term with her last day in school being Thursday 28th March 2024. I am sure you will continue to pray for Miss Berner and her partner as they await the exciting arrival of their first baby.

We are now in a position to confirm the maternity cover arrangements for the summer term for 4B (Year 4). I am delighted to be able to announce that **Mrs Joanne Backhouse** will be returning to a full-time contract and will take on teaching responsibility for 4B. Many children and parents/carers will be familiar with Mrs Backhouse as she will have taught some of the Year 4 children when they were in Year 3. This arrangement will bring consistency and continuity to 4B and continue the academic attainment and progress they are making this academic year. We don't even need to change the class name!!

To facilitate Mrs Backhouse's move to Year 4, **Mrs Mel Tucker** will take on the two day a week teaching responsibility in 3BW. Mrs Tucker will work on a Monday and Tuesday with Mrs Whitaker continuing to teach the class on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Mrs Tucker is a very experienced teacher and a very familiar face in school, regularly taking tuition groups as well as covering staff for PPA time. The only change to our normal level of service will be renaming 3BW to 3TW!!

Finally, as Miss Berner is also the Lower School Team Leader we have made some internal adjustments to appoint a new person to this post from within the Senior Leadership Team. I am delighted to confirm that **Mrs Sophie Antrobus** will take on this role for the period of maternity leave and will be the Team Leader for both Lower School and Upper School becoming the **Key Stage 2 Team Leader**.

The Senior Leadership Team and I are confident that this is an excellent solution to covering this period of maternity leave using staff members that are known by the school, the parents/carers and more importantly the children. I am sure you will show your full support to all the staff as they take on new roles and responsibilities.

Respect

One of our core Character Education values at St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School is: **RESPECT**.

In light of some recent incidents, I feel it has become necessary to remind parents/carers and visitors about their conduct whilst on the school premises and when speaking to members of staff. The notice below which is displayed in our school office/admin areas, is supported and endorsed by the Governing Body. I hope that it acts as a polite reminder. Thank you for your support and understanding.

Notice to Visitors to our School

All our staff are here to help parents/carers and other visitors.

Please treat them with respect.

We will not tolerate threatening or intimidating verbal or physical behaviour.

If you have any concerns, please speak to us

The Governing Body
St Thomas of Canterbury C of E Primary School

The Real Easter Egg

With Easter being relatively early this year (31st March) it will soon be time to turn our attentions to buying Easter eggs for our family and loved ones. As in previous years, we have teamed up with St Thomas of Canterbury Church and can offer you the opportunity to purchase eggs from The Real Easter Egg (The Meaningful Chocolate Company). These eggs, as well as being delicious, come with an Easter story-activity book. You can choose from:

- **Dark - £5.50** (Includes a large 24 page Easter story-activity book, prize competition and a super thick dark chocolate egg)
- **Original - £4.50** (Includes a large 24 page Easter story-activity book, prize competition and a super thick milk chocolate egg)
- **Special Edition – £9.99** (Includes an Easter Blessings milk chocolate bar, a designer Easter card and a luxury milk chocolate egg)
- **The Real Easter Egg Fun Pack - £5.00** (Includes an Easter story activity poster, six milk chocolate eggs with a lovely creamy taste)

If you wish to order one or more of the above then you can do so via our school ParentPay system. Just log in to your child's account and select and pay for what you want. All orders must be received by **Friday 1st March 2024** to ensure you receive them before we break up on Thursday 28th March 2024.



School Uniform

We appear to have an increasing number of children arriving to school with the incorrect school uniform. This is particularly a problem with children in Key Stage 2 having no tie and children across the primary school with incorrect footwear. We take great pride in our appearance and have high expectations of children's presentation. Please can I ask both parents/carers and children to help support this by ensuring they are correctly dressed for school. School ties for children in Key Stage 2 can be purchased via your child's ParentPay account at the price of £4.00 – once it has been paid for online we will issue the school tie to your child via the School Office. **Please remember to put your child's name on it!**

REMINDER: Year 3 Swimming



Lessons for the children in Year 3 (3DW & 3BW) will begin on Friday 2nd February 2024. I would like to remind parents that we very much rely on your payments to cover the cost of swimming lessons of **£45 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 increasing. 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. 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 **£3.50**. 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.

News from St Thomas' Church contributed by Fr Mark

This Sunday, we are looking forward to welcoming you all to St Thomas' Church as we celebrate Education Sunday which is an opportunity to give thanks for all the great work that takes place in our Parish Schools, for the children to contribute to our worship and for us all to pray for everyone connected to education both locally and nationally. The service will be followed by the usual Bake Off competition, the flyers for which were sent out earlier this week. The full programme for Sunday 28th is as follows;

08.00 Said Mass

10.00 Sung Mass for Education Sunday

followed by Bake Off Cake competition and refreshments in the Church Hall

18.00 Epiphany Carol Service

The evening service is something new as we use readings and music to reflect on the three significant stories from this season of Epiphany, the arrival of the wise men, the Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan and the water being turned to wine at the wedding in Cana. All are welcome.

During the week Wednesday sees our cake and cuppa mornings from 10.00 to 12.00 and on Thursdays at 10.30 we hold our Toddler service which leads into the toddler group that meets in the Hall. On Thursday evening at 19.00, we continue to offer Alpha, next week the question we are exploring is 'How can I have faith?' while the week after the question is 'Why and how do I pray?' Curious? Anyone is welcome to drop in for a session to find out more, please come to the door to the Church Centre around the back of the Church, just before 19.00.

Sunday 4th February we are keeping as Candlemas or as it is also known, the Feast of the Presentation when Jesus was presented by Mary and Joseph in the temple and where Simeon and Anna proclaimed him to be the long-awaited saviour of God's people. At 10.00 the service begins with the blessing of candles and a procession. The full day is.

08.00 Said Mass

10.00 Sung Mass with the blessing of Candles and Procession

the Clubhouse meets during this service

followed by refreshments in the Church Hall

18.00 Choral Evensong and Benediction.

Looking further ahead, I have managed to secure a date for our Bishop to come and administer the sacrament of Confirmation, this will be Sunday 21st July 2024. Once I have arranged the timings of the confirmation classes details will be shared with the children, inviting those interested to register their interest.

Finally....

This week we have been informed that we have achieved the **Active Essex Key Stage 1 Award!** The Active Essex Team have sent us a message of congratulation and we are now proudly able to use the logo below on our school website.



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.