

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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



NEWSLETTER

19th July 2024



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 and confidence whilst performing in front of a live audience. Those of you who were able to attend will have been treated to an eclectic mix of songs, some new and others familiar. 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 Little Havens Children's Hospice. Across the three performances we raised **£550.29**

Our Key Stage 2 children also had the opportunity to bring us musical entertainment at another wonderful concert last Tuesday evening, 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 **£134.64**

Earlier in the month it was the turn of Year 6, who highly entertained us with two stunning performances of 'A Hint of Snow White' – the children were amazing! 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 cry!), it made us smile and we saw gifts and talents which had not necessarily been seen 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 **£491.61**

Along with the earlier charity sponsored event this term we raised a total of **£1,708.94** for Little Havens Children's Hospice. Thank you to everyone who has supported these events.

There is quite a lot of information in this newsletter which I would encourage you to take careful note of!

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, the pandemic 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 becomes a statutory requirement from September 2024.

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.

At our Full Governing Body meeting this week, the Governors have now approved and ratified our new **Pupil Attendance Policy** for September 2024. This is now available from the school website (www.stthomaspri.org) and can be found via the homepage by clicking on 'Key Information' → 'School Policies'. We have also produced a summary attendance leaflet for parents/carers which will be distributed with this newsletter. This is also available on the school website alongside the full policy document.

REMINDER: School Dinners – September 2024

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 2024.

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 **£2.53** per day (£12.65 a week) from September 2024.

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.

Thank you for your support and understanding.

ADVANCE NOTICE: When we return to school on Wednesday 4th September 2024 we will be starting on **WEEK 1** of the menu cycle.

Essex Year of Numbers – Summer Challenge

Please see the information below about some exciting opportunities for your child to boost their mathematics skills this summer with the Essex Year of Numbers!

Boost Children's Maths Skills with the Essex Year of Numbers Summer Bingo Challenge

Spark your child's love for learning and maths this summer holiday and win exclusive maths prizes with our Summer Bingo challenge. Students that complete any four activities will be entered into a prize draw. Why not aim for a 'full house' and complete all 16 for a chance to win an even bigger prize. [Download the Essex Year of app](#) for more information and to enter the Summer Bingo challenge.

Countdown to the Olympics with the Modern Pentathlon Maths Competition

As part of the [Essex Year of Numbers](#) campaign, we're launching two competitions to give children's maths skills a magic boost. Students can develop their learning by taking part in daily maths activities inspired by the five events of the modern pentathlon. Different levels of challenges mean Key stages 1, 2 and 3 can all take part, with prizes available for each key stage every day. To access the free resource for use in class and to enter the competition [download the Essex Year of app](#).

Football Tournament

On Monday 1st July two teams represented the school in the St Helen's 6-a-side girls' football tournament. Eight local schools were involved with 12 teams participating. St Thomas' Greens played well finishing 4th in their group and were presented with Growth Mindset certificates for their fantastic effort and attitude. St Thomas' Yellows finished second in their group, which meant they faced Brentwood A in the semi-final, which they won 2-1. The final, against Bentley A, was equally close-fought, but was eventually won 2-0 by St Thomas'. Well done to all the girls involved - a fantastic afternoon of football.



Confirmation Service

This Sunday (21st July) we have **27** of our Upper School children 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 Jonathan, Bishop of Fulham, 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 and his various helpers for holding 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 – Tuesday 23rd July 2024

Next week sees a number of services taking place both in and out of school as we look to bring the academic year to a successful conclusion.

As is tradition, the **Key Stage 2** children will be going to St. Thomas of Canterbury Church for our Leavers' Eucharist on Tuesday 23rd July 2024 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.

Later in the afternoon, we will be holding our end of academic year Eucharist for children in **EYFS & Key Stage 1** with Fr. Mark in the KS1 Hall. This service will start at 2:00p.m. This is a wonderful opportunity to come together to give thanks to God for everything we have achieved and accomplished. Parents/carers are once again very welcome to join us.

Exercise Books

As we draw close to the end of the academic year we have arranged to send some of 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 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 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.

Finally....

Last Friday the Year 6 children hosted their annual Charity Fair and thankfully the weather was kind enough to allow us to go ahead as planned. 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 **£784.96** for Little Havens Children's 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 **Mrs Jeni Wild** and **Mrs Sharon Harries** who are 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 of the school. Both of them will remain in our thoughts and prayers.

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. 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 **RS** (Mrs Simmons) who were the EYFS winners.

The joint Key Stage 1 winners were **21B** (Mrs Burrus) & **1CA** (Mrs Crooks & Mrs Anthony)

The Key Stage 2 winners were **5A** (Mrs Antrobus)



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 2024-2025 academic year on **Wednesday 4th September 2024**.

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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