

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY
CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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



NEWSLETTER

25th October 2024



We made it! Eight long weeks ago, back when the sun was shining and we were enjoying the warmth of late summer, the academic year got underway. Now at the end of October, surrounded by the colours of autumn and with winter knocking on the door we prepare to break up for a thoroughly well-deserved half term holiday.

Today we are looking forward to welcoming back our Year 5 children, staff and volunteers who have returned from their residential trip to Norfolk. I am pleased that they were blessed with fine weather and I am sure they will have lots to tell and share following their experiences at Letton Hall. I am very aware how tiring these residential trips are for both adults and children and I am sure everyone will sleep well tonight!

The last few weeks of this half term have certainly been very busy and I am sure we are all looking forward to a well deserved break next week and a chance to recharge your batteries. Amongst other things, we are delighted that both our Year 6 residential trip to Rock UK, South Wales and our Year 5 residential visit to Letton Hall, Norfolk have taken place and given these children a memorable off-site experience to enrich our curriculum delivery.

It also seems hard to believe that our children in Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) are now coming to the end of their first half term in our primary school – how this time has flown by! Over the past 8 weeks, it has been a joy to witness how the Reception children have approached the various experiences, activities and challenges in school. They have worked so hard to learn daily routines, make friendships with their peers, establish relationships with adults and build up their confidence and resilience to learning.

Please look out for the reminder later in this newsletter regarding our non-pupil professional development day on Monday 4th November and the move to winter uniform when the children return on TUESDAY 5th November 2024.

Parents' Evening

We are thrilled to already have **71%** of our parent/carer community signed up for parents' evening since our booking system opened on Monday this week through our online virtual platform, SchoolCloud.



Our Autumn Term Parents' Evenings 2024 are once again being conducted virtually via video appointment. Our previous experiences of using virtual video appointments for Parents' Evening shows a greatly increased attendance rate and the ability to ensure the meetings are conducted in a timely and efficient manner. It also means you can join from the comfort of your own home without having to come back to the school on a cold, damp

autumn evening. Virtual appointments also help manage work commitments, avoid the need for child care and cuts down on journey times. We do plan to have hybrid (face-to-face or virtual) Parents' Evenings in the Spring Term 2025 as well as our usual 'Open Classrooms' opportunity on 12th November 2024.

On Monday we sent out details via Parent Hub regarding how you go about booking video appointments with your child's classteacher. Appointments will be available on Wednesday 6th November and Thursday 7th November 2024 between 4:00p.m. and 7:00p.m. The appointments will be kept strictly to 10 minutes per child.

REMEMBER: Bookings close at 6:00p.m. TODAY!!

As with our face to face appointments children must not attend these virtual video meetings as it is important that they are conducted in a professional manner and parents/carers and classteachers can have discussions without interruptions and maximise the limited time. The meeting should be conducted in a quiet environment free from distraction.

FINAL REMINDER – Winter School Uniform

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that AFTER the October half term holiday all children must be wearing winter uniform.

WINTER

[Must be worn for the second half of the autumn term and spring term]

EYFS/KS1

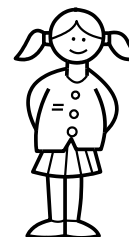
Grey skirt or pinafore dress, ***white polo shirt, *bottle green cardigan or jumper**,
White/grey/black socks or plain green/grey/black tights.

Grey tailored trousers (or tailored shorts), ***white polo shirt, *bottle green jumper**
Grey or black socks only.

Key Stage 2

Grey skirt or pinafore dress,
white shirt, school tie,
***bottle green cardigan or jumper**,
White/grey/black socks or plain green/grey/black tights.

Grey tailored trousers (or tailored shorts),
white shirt, school tie,
***bottle green jumper**,
Grey or black socks only.



This means all children in Key Stage 2 wearing ties and white shirts with collars.

N.B. Items marked * must have the school badge embroidered on the garment.

Shoes need to be sensible black leather (no trainers or boots). We do not like lights or toys in the shoes so please bear this in mind when you are purchasing any new shoes.

Jewellery can cause problems in school due to Health & Safety requirements. Children may wear an inexpensive watch (no Smart watches) to school providing it is not too big or colourful and they will not be distracted by wearing it. No bracelets, rings or necklaces are permitted. Children are not allowed to wear earrings for PE under any circumstances so it makes sense to leave these at home altogether. However, if you insist on your child wearing earrings please ensure they are plain gold or silver studs and that they are capable of taking their earrings out themselves.

May I also remind you that long hair must be tied back with a black, white or green hairband. We prefer boys to have short hair. Children's hair should not be coloured or have patterns shaved into it.

School Bags

We are having increasing problems with the quantity and size of school bags which are being brought in to classrooms across the primary school. Our classroom cloakrooms are limited in size and when children bring large bags/rucksacks alongside coats and PE bags we are finding it increasingly difficult to store them in a neat and safe manner.

As a reminder the following applies to school bags:

- In EYFS (Reception) and Key Stage 1 (Year 1 & Year 2) the children **DO NOT** need to bring a school bag to school. All they need to bring on a daily basis is their bookbag which will contain their reading book/s and their Home School Diary. They do not need any other bags.
- In Key Stage 2 (Year 3 – 6) the children may wish to bring a small bag/rucksack containing their reading book/s, Home School Diary, pencil case and homework items. These do not need to be excessively big as classroom space is limited.

If you are purchasing items of school uniform from the PTA pre-loved sales, please do not purchase a school bag unless your child is in the correct year group to need one. At the moment we have a lot of Key Stage 1 children appearing with bags which are unnecessary. Thank you for your support.

The Royal British Legion - Poppy Appeal 2024

After half term we will return to the month of November. As a school community we always turn our thoughts and prayers to 'remembering' and the act of remembrance. This is our chance to remember before God all those men, women and children who have been affected by war or conflict, both in this country and around the world, as well as mark the ultimate sacrifice made by service men and women. As in previous years we will once again be supporting the work of the Royal British Legion and making poppies available to the children and adults for a modest donation. These will be on sale from Tuesday 5th November up to and including Monday 11th November. The House Captains will be visiting each classroom after lunch every day to collect donations and distribute poppies – a minimum donation of 50p is suggested. It would be a fitting tribute if on 11th November every child was able to wear their poppy with pride.



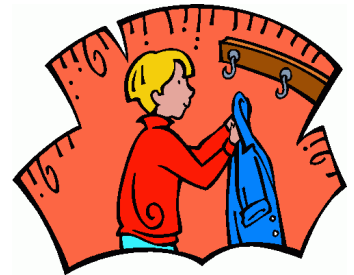
The Royal British Legion have also supplied us with some further items that can be purchased to support their charitable work. The House Captains, supported by the School Office staff, will be taking charge of these items on sale alongside the poppies, beginning after half term. Below is a list of the items on sale:

- Poppy wristband/bracelets – **£1.00**
- Poppy snap band – **£1.50**
- Poppy reflector – **50p**

If you would like your child to purchase one of these items then please bring in your money to school. For the younger children in EYFS/KS1 you may want to pop it in an envelope labelled with your child's name and the item you wish to purchase. Please send in the correct money as we are unable to provide change. Stock is limited so once they're gone, they're gone!

Coats!

With the colder, wet weather now starting to appear I would like to give a general reminder about coats. Rather worryingly, we still have a growing number of children across the primary school who seem to come to school without a coat. Many of you may arrive by car in the morning but the children still need a coat in school to wear at morning break and lunchtime. Please ensure your child has a coat in school every day and that it is clearly named. The staff are constantly reminding children to put their coats on during the day and we hope by wrapping up we can prevent coughs and colds developing. Thank you.



Non-Pupil Professional Development & Training Day

Please remember and take note of the fact that Monday 4th November 2024 is one of our designated non-pupil professional development and training days. This means that the school will be **CLOSED** to ALL children and they do not need to attend school on this day. All children must return to school on Tuesday 5th November 2024 to begin the second half of the autumn term.

Open Classrooms – 12th November 2024



We are very excited to be inviting you to our 'Open Classrooms' opportunity! 'Open Classrooms' for parents/carers will be held on **Tuesday 12th November 2024** from 3:30p.m. until 4:15p.m. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to view your child's working environment, see where they sit and marvel at the displays within the classroom. The classteacher's will also be present to answer any questions you might have about the work on display. You will also get a chance to look at some of your child's exercise books (English and Maths) to see the work they have completed to date. It is not an opportunity to discuss academic progress and attainment as this will be covered during parents' evening.

This is an open invitation with no designated appointment times and I'm sure your child will relish the opportunity to proudly show you around their classroom. Please remember to wait on the playground until 3:30p.m. Unfortunately we are not able to admit any pushchairs due to health and safety/fire regulations. We look forward to seeing you!

News from the Parish Church of St Thomas of Canterbury

Fr Mark writes;

It was lovely to see some of you at our Harvest Thanksgiving on Sunday and I hope those who stayed for the Potluck Lunch enjoyed the food and the fellowship.

Our journey through the Trinity seasons reaches its conclusion this Sunday which sees our usual programme of worship;

08.00 Said Mass (lasting about 45 minutes)

10.00 Sung Mass (lasting about 75 minutes)

18.00 Choral Evensong (lasting around 50 minutes)

Wednesday mornings are always 'Cake and a Cuppa' when friends old and new gather to catch up on the news and enjoy a slice of delicious homecake cake. This runs from 10.00 to 12.00 and some will stay on for the 12.15 Mass.

On Friday we have a 'Crafty Fridays' group when there is an opportunity to undertake various craft activities with the chance for a natter. This runs from 10.00 to 12.00.

Saturday the 2nd of November is the annual commemoration of the Faithful Departed when we remember in prayer those who have gone before in the life of faith. During the service, the names of those who had died are read out. If you would like to have the name of a loved one remembered please pop into the church and add the name to the list, the steward will happily show you where and how. Alternatively, you can email names to brentwood.st.thomas.martyr@gmail.com

The Mass of Sung Requiem will be at 10.00 and you are very welcome to come along to hear the names remembered in prayer.

Sunday the 3rd of November we keep as All Saints Sunday,

08.00 Said Mass (lasting about 45 minutes)

10.00 Sung Mass (lasting about 75 minutes)

18.00 Choral Evensong and Benediction (lasting around 50 minutes)

Looking forward, the following Sunday will be Remembrance Sunday with the usual civic acts of remembrance and the service of remembrance in St Thomas. Look out for further details coming soon.

Finally, an update for those with children in Year Six who are applying for Secondary School places, all SIFs received have been processed. Forms to be posted went Thursday and those needing letters for upload should receive these on Friday via email. The closing date for applications is the 31st of October although Becket Keys accepts SIFs until the 30th of November. Please refer to my original email about dates and deadlines.

Finally....

IMPORTANT REMINDER - As you are well aware, the statutory closing date for applications from parents/carers of Year 6 children (for a secondary school place in Year 7 from September 2025) is **31st October 2024**. I would like to remind any parents/carers of Year 6 children who have yet to submit an application, that they must do so by 31st October 2024.

Applications can be made via the Essex website www.essex.gov.uk/admissions

Thank you for your continued support this term and I wish you a safe, peaceful and enjoyable half term holiday next week. We look forward to welcoming you back on Tuesday 5th November 2024 – don't be late!!

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