

# ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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



## NEWSLETTER

15<sup>th</sup> November 2024

The school fell silent on Monday morning as we came together for collective worship as a school community at 11 o'clock to observe 2 minutes silence in memory of all those lost in war and conflict. We also remembered all those families who have been affected by war; men, women and children. It is so important that we mark Armistice Day or Remembrance Day (11<sup>th</sup> November) in this way. During World War I alone approximately nine million people were killed, millions more were injured and families were destroyed. The children marked this period of silence impeccably, reflecting upon the ultimate sacrifice made by the many so that we may live in peace today. During our act of worship we shared the words of hope and commitment:

***'When you go home  
tell them of us and say,  
for your tomorrow  
we gave our today'.***



Last Friday we were also in attendance at the Brentwood branch of The Royal British Legion Schools' Service when our Year 6 House Captains and Year 2 CATS Reps laid a wreath and class crosses on behalf of St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School. It was a fitting tribute and allowed us to pay our respects to our local heroes.



It is always a joy after the October half term to see the return of winter uniform with pristine white shirts and school ties on display in **Key Stage 2**. I know that as a school we take great pride in our appearance and presentation both in school and when out in the local and wider community. Thank you for continuing to support our high expectations and school uniform policy. A few children in Key Stage 2 do not have school ties on or are wearing school ties with polo shirts or shirts with the incorrect collar. If you need a school tie they can be ordered and paid for through ParentPay and we will give the tie directly to your child. All children must be wearing collared white shirts with their top buttons done up so you can clip on your tie. Let's see if next week we can have 100% correct school uniform...and don't forget to tuck your shirts in!

Thank you to everyone who has already sent in a shoebox for the Operation Christmas Child appeal. I have witnessed a growing number being carried into school and carefully stored in the classrooms and corridors over the past few weeks. Our collection date will be some time in the week commencing 18<sup>th</sup> November, so please do keep sending in your donations to ensure they get to vulnerable children ready for Christmas.

As always there are a number of important reminders in this newsletter regarding up and coming events and I hope you will respond to them accordingly. Please remember that the vast majority of the correspondence we send out to you is always freely accessible via Parent Hub or from the school website, so if you think you may have missed a letter, please visit [www.stthomaspri.org](http://www.stthomaspri.org) or check your Parent Hub channels.

## Parents' Evening – Thank You!

We were thrilled to have **82%** of our parent community sign up for parents' evening last week through our online virtual platform, SchoolCloud. Over the course of the two evenings we enjoyed the opportunity to meet with you and discuss the successes of your children and their achievements since the beginning of this academic year. I know the teaching staff really enjoy these opportunities and developing stronger links between home and school. I do hope you were able to share some of the feedback with your child/ren and demonstrate how proud you are of their enthusiasm and efforts. Many thanks for your continued support.

This year we had a higher proportion than normal of parents/carers who missed the booking deadline and subsequently requested booking after the SchoolCloud system closed. This created a great deal of additional administration which was both time consuming for the office staff and the classteachers. Please be mindful that in the future it may not always be possible to schedule a meeting opportunity after the booking window has closed.



## Staffing Update

I am delighted to share with you the wonderful news that **Mrs Sophie Antrobus** has informed us that she is pregnant and expecting her third child in April 2025. This is wonderful and exciting news and I am sure you will join me in congratulating Mrs Antrobus and her husband (Luke) on this announcement. We are currently ensuring that we have all the relevant risk assessments in place to keep Mrs Antrobus safe in and around school and starting the process of preparing for her maternity leave later in the academic year. In the spring term the Governing Body and senior leadership team will start the process of finding maternity cover for Mrs Antrobus' classteacher role in school ready for the summer term 2025.

## Open Classrooms – Thank You!

It was wonderful to welcome so many parents/carers and other visitors in to school on Tuesday afternoon for our 'Open Classrooms' event. This provided a fantastic opportunity for you to view your child's working environment, see where they sit and marvel at the displays within the classroom and around the school. I know the staff were very grateful for your support and interest in what your children have been completing so far this academic year. There will be another opportunity to repeat this event later in the academic year and we can't wait to invite you back!

## Children in Need 2024

Today and across the course of this week we have been marking and supporting Children in Need! In a change to previous years we have spread some of the activities and events over the week to try and engage with more parents/carers, staff and children. It was wonderful to welcome all those 'Daily Mile' runners (and some walkers!) on Tuesday as we all stretched our legs before the school day started. Wednesday saw a good number of people taking the opportunity to enjoy a hot chocolate and cake at the end of day sale. Thank you to all those 'bakers' who supported us by baking or providing cakes and biscuits for sale. Today it has been a chance to leave our school uniforms at home and enjoy a non-uniform day in support of this amazing charity.

Many of you will be aware that this is an annual charitable event that we have supported for many years raising thousands of pounds for children and young people in need and less fortunate than ourselves. A special mention must go to Mrs McKechnie, our Children in Need Co-ordinator, and Class 6M who have planned and organised the many events which have successfully taken place. I do hope that every child has enjoyed the opportunity to take a full and active part and bring in some money to support our fundraising efforts. Thank you for your support!



## Reception Admissions for September 2025

As you may be aware, the primary school (Reception) admission round opened on **Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024** for parents/carers of children to apply for a Reception school place for the academic year that starts in September 2025. Even if you have a sibling at our school already, you still need to apply if your child is due to start in Reception in September 2025.

The statutory national closing date for applications is **15<sup>th</sup> January 2025**.

From **4<sup>th</sup> November 2024**, applications can be made online via [www.essex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions). 99% of parents/carers in Essex applied online last year. All of the application information is available from this website.

The website [www.essex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.essex.gov.uk/admissions) also has a copy of the Primary Education in Essex 2025-2026 booklet and the Schools Admissions Policies Directories contain details of all admission policies.

## School Closures



I never like to use the 's' word but as we move further through the autumn and closer to winter we need to talk about snow!! At this time of year we must be realistic and be prepared for the onset of winter and the colder weather it will inevitably bring and our response to snow which may enforce a school closure. A number of years ago we were informed that the local radio stations will **no longer** be announcing or publicising via their websites the school closures lists. Instead Essex County Council will continue to use their notification system to schools. Schools are now able to complete a short notification either on the day or the day before the closure via the secure access area on ESI. Once the notification is submitted a live feed will appear on the **Essex.gov** website ([www.essex.gov.uk](http://www.essex.gov.uk)) so parents can stay informed. Closure

lists on the Essex website will constantly update as and when notifications are received. Closure lists for the next day will go live the night before so parents can plan ahead. Once again, we are being requested to direct parents to check the Essex County Council website for closure information. In addition, we will continue to use other means such as our Parent Hub service or our school website to inform parents of closures.

## Coats!

With the colder weather beginning to settle in I would like to give a general reminder about coats. Rather worryingly we still have a growing number of children 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.



## Leaving the School Site at the End of the Day

Over the past few weeks we have been increasingly aware of the number of children and parents/carers who remain on the school site after the school day has ended. School finishes at 3:25p.m. and parents/carers and children are expected to leave the school site as soon as possible. Children should not be remaining on site to use the school play equipment, playground/astro or other spaces.

We have many after school clubs that operate in and around the school site and for the safety of these children and to meet our safeguarding responsibilities we need to secure the school premises as soon as possible to prevent unauthorised personnel entering the school grounds. Please can I ask that at the end of the day you make a swift exit to allow us to secure the site and prevent anyone from being locked in. Please use both exit gates (Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2) to exit on to Sawyers Hall Lane. Thank you for your co-operation and understanding in this matter.

## Christmas Productions 2024

Next week we are aiming to send out information about our various Christmas productions and performances at the end of this term. This will include details about dates, times and ticket allocations. Please look out for this letter...coming soon!

## Don't Be Late!!!

We continue to have difficulty with some parents/carers following the correct procedure if they arrive late for the start of the school day with their children. Once the school pedestrian gates are closed at 8:55a.m. all late arrivals must enter the school premises via the Key Stage 2 pedestrian gate located next to the Caretaker's house. Once through this gate you must report to the Main Office. If your child is in EYFS/Key Stage 1 you will be given a coloured 'late pass' which will then allow your child to enter through the Finance Office. Please **DO NOT** go straight to the Finance Office as they cannot admit your child without a pass which proves you have reported to the Main Office first. This system is set up to safeguard your children and ensure we know exactly who is on the school premises. Registers are held in the Main Office NOT the Finance Office. Please assist us in this matter – thank you!

## Finally....

The Brentwood Foodbank have issued us with a letter of thanks for all the donations received as part of our Harvest collection before half term. The Primary School donated a total weight of **277.80kg** ( we donated 257.50kg in 2023) – which is amazing!

Thank you for your continued support and have a good 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](mailto: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.*