



NEWSLETTER

13th February 2026

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools - SIAMS

Those of you who are avid readers of the school newsletter will know that we did not issue one last Friday in line with our fortnightly publication schedule. This was owing to the fact we received our final SIAMS inspection report following the inspection that took place on 16th January 2026. We wanted to give you the chance to really focus on this inspection report and celebrate and digest all the fantastic elements that were contained within it. I hope by now you have had a chance to access it either via the Parent Hub message or via the school website. As a school community we should all feel very proud of our success and the fact St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School is a Church School in every sense of our DNA!

Since its publication, we have received lots of positive messages of praise and recognition and I thought it would be nice to share with you the email I received from Carrie Prior – Director of Education at the Diocese of Chelmsford. Mrs Prior writes:

"I just wanted to send a warm congratulations to you and everyone at St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School on your brilliant SIAMS outcome. The report is such a testament to the care, vision and dedication that shine through the whole school community.

It was wonderful to see recognition of the loving and respectful culture you've built, the strong sense of responsibility shown by pupils, the excellent partnership with the church, and the inclusive support offered to all pupils, including those with SEND. The praise for your RE curriculum and the way it helps children grow in understanding and confidence was especially heartening.

This is a hugely well-deserved outcome, and I hope you're all taking a moment to celebrate. Please do pass on my congratulations and thanks to the whole team."

We are now approaching the February half term which also signals the approximate half way mark of the academic year. Many of us will look back on what we have achieved since the beginning of September, as well as what we hope to go on to achieve before finishing for the summer holiday in July. There is still so much to look forward to and we really do appreciate your support and working in partnership with us for the benefit of all the children in our school. Thank you!

Essex Healthy Schools

I am delighted to inform you that we have received notification from the Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Services Healthy Schools Team, to confirm that once again we have been recognised as a Healthy School for 2025-2026. In recognition we have been presented with a plaque to demonstrate our commitment to the Essex County Council driven statement that all Essex schools are healthy.

Through our work in school, the delivery of our PE curriculum and engagement and involvement in sport we are improving health and wellbeing outcomes for children. This involves working hard to create health promoting environments and supporting the wellbeing of the whole school community. We look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the Healthy Schools Team, supporting us to exceed the Healthy Schools expectations, embed best practice, and celebrate future successes.



Healthy Schools

Safer Internet Day 2026 – Exploring the safe and responsible use of AI

This week, our school joined others nationwide to celebrate Safer Internet Day 2026, the largest global online safety campaign. This year's theme, 'Smart tech, safe choices – Exploring the safe and responsible use of AI,' focuses on teaching children and young people the skills to use AI technology safely and responsibly, and highlights available support. From voice assistants, to chatbots, to algorithms, AI technology is playing an increasingly large role in all our lives. It is important that we find time to discuss these tools and the impact they can have on our own and our families' online experiences, including:

- the news and content we see,
- the way we work, including using AI for homework or studies,
- and the risk of misuse of AI, for example to create realistic scams.

We encourage you to join us in celebrating by continuing the conversation about AI technology at home. Here are some helpful resources:

- You can complete the [UK Safer Internet Centre's interactive quizzes](#) with your child.
- Read the UK Safer Internet Centre's tops tips for parents and carers [here](#).
- You can share the UK Safer Internet Centre's [top tips for children and young people](#) with your child.

You may also like to use one of these prompts to start a conversation with your child:

- What's your favourite thing to do online?
- Have you ever used an AI tool? How did it make you feel?
- What do you like about AI technology?
- Do you have any worries about AI technology?
- What advice would you give to your friends about using AI?
- Who would you talk to if you saw something worrying online?
- What more can I do to help you feel safe online?



A key part of protecting children and young people from online harms is through preventative education. By talking about this in school and at home, we can all work towards keeping children safe when they are online. Celebrating Safer Internet Day is a great opportunity for you to re-emphasise the online safety messages we deliver throughout the year.

Mobile Phones - Reminder

The staff and I are becoming increasingly concerned about the number of children, particularly in Upper School (Year 5 & Year 6) who appear to be bringing mobile phones in to school. Our school policy, agreed by the Governing Body, is that children are **not permitted to bring mobile phones in to school**. This is clearly communicated in our school literature and correspondence.

A growing number of children are seen before school, outside of the school premises, using a mobile phone. This behaviour is then seen again as the children prepare to leave school at the end of the school day. No child in school should be seen using or carrying a mobile phone whilst on the school premises. If a child is spotted using a mobile phone on the school premises, they will be reminded in the first instance of the school mobile phone policy and protocol. If this behaviour is repeated then the mobile phone will be confiscated and a parent/carer will be asked to collect it from the School Office.

Please can we ask for your continued support in this matter. In doing so, we would also ask parents/carers to refrain from using your mobile phones on the school premises. We would encourage you to talk to your children when you drop them off and/or pick them up about their day ahead and what they have been doing in school. Having that valuable opportunity to have a face to face conversation and share in your child's school experience is really valuable. Thank you for your support and understanding.



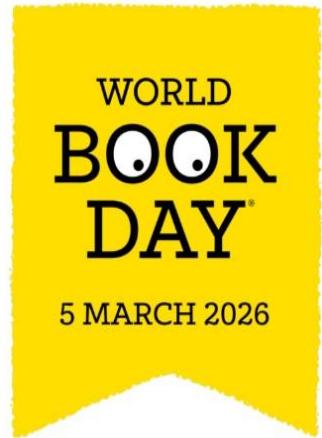
World Book Day 2026

I am sure many of you will have noticed from the dates issued back in January that Thursday 5th March is World Book Day 2026. We also sent out further details on 26th January with two letters (EYFS & KS1) and (KS2) from Mrs Coughtrey about the exciting events taking place across the course of this day. As we have done in previous years, we are hoping to be able to celebrate this day by inviting your children to dress up! This is a day devoted to celebrating good books and literature and I hope we can do this in style!

The children will be undertaking lots of book related activities across the course of World Book Day, and to get them in the spirit we are asking them to come to school dressed as their favourite dinosaur or explorer (EYFS & KS1) or their favourite magical or mythical character (KS2).

The emphasis is once again on simple costumes and you do not need to go to great lengths or vast expense to provide a costume for this day. The children can wear their costumes to school and it would be even better if they could bring a copy of the book from which their character comes. Please bear in mind that the children will be completing normal lessons throughout the day so the costume needs to be practical for school. For the same reason we ask that the children do not wear hair dye or make up. The staff are going to join in with the fun and festivities and I am sure we are all looking forward to seeing what costumes and characters emerge!

At the end of the day they will come home with their World Book Day voucher which they can exchange at a local book shop for one of the World Book Day special titles or money off a full-priced book.



Goodbye & Thank You – Mrs Gill Hall



On 1st October 1992, Mrs Gill Hall pulled on her crossing patrol uniform for the first time and stepped out into Sawyers Hall Lane. Little did she know then, that over 30 years later she would still be providing this invaluable service to our school communities! Through rain and shine Mrs Hall has diligently undertaken her role and kept numerous children and families safe from the challenges faced in our road.

Today we say a sad farewell as Mrs Hall steps out on our crossing patrol in Sawyers Hall Lane for the very last time. After half term, Mrs Hall is moving on to continue her duties at a school closer to home and I am sure they will soon realise what a wonderful

person they will be welcoming in to their school community. Not only are we saying goodbye to Mrs Hall in her crossing patrol capacity, but also as one of our loyal and dedicated Midday Assistants. Mrs Hall has held this position for almost 20 years and we are very sorry to see her leave our school.

I am sure you will join me in thanking Mrs Hall for all her years of loyal service and wish her every success for the future – she will be greatly missed.

After half term the crossing patrol will be covered initially by relief staff from Essex County Council. However, we have been informed that they have now successfully appointed a permanent replacement and they will begin once they have completed necessary training and pre-employment recruitment checks.

I am sure we will make them feel very welcome once they take up post.

No Chocolate Spread

This is an urgent reminder about the importance of maintaining our school as a nut free environment. Over the past few weeks we have noticed a number of children who have items in their lunchboxes which contain products that potentially could have nut products in them – mainly chocolate spread.

We are proud to be a healthy school and promote healthy lifestyles and diet for all our children. Please can we ask you to support us in this matter and remember that under **no circumstances** should children be bringing in food items that contain nuts – including chocolate spread. We have a number of children across our school with severe allergies to nuts so please do not send in any snack or packed lunch items that obviously contain nuts. Thank you for your co-operation.

Advance Notice: St David's Day



We will soon be reaching the second of our House feast days for this academic year. On Friday 27th February 2026 we will be celebrating **St David**, with the actual Feast Day being on Sunday 1st March!

On Friday 27th February we are inviting all the children who are in St David's House to wear non-school uniform and dress in their House colour which is **YELLOW**. This opportunity is only for children in St David's House as the other Houses will get their opportunity later in the academic year – later in March for St. Patrick and April for St George. We do hope that all the St David's children encouraged by their House Captains will take pride in marking this event. In preparation, the children in St David's House may like to research some facts about the life of St David and share it with their classteacher.

Finally....

After half term we will be holding school Eucharists on Friday 27th February with Fr. Mark, as we journey through the season of Lent. Our Lent Eucharists will be held in the school halls. Parents/carers are very welcome to attend.

The **EYFS/Reception, Year 1, Year 2 & Year 3 Lent Eucharist** will take place at 9:15a.m. in the KS1 Hall.

The **Year 4, Year 5 & Year 6 Lent Eucharist** will take place at 10:45a.m. in the KS2 Hall.

As we think about preparing for Easter, I am pleased to inform you that we have once again linked up with St Thomas of Canterbury Church to offer the opportunity to purchase Easter Eggs from the **Meaningful Chocolate Company**. Please look out for the separate Parent Hub message (sent on 9th February) with information about how to purchase via your Parent Pay account – pricings are below:

Original 2026 Edition - £6.20

Dark Edition - £6.90

Fun Pack - £6.50



I wish you all a wonderful half term break and look forward to welcoming you back for the second half of the spring term on **Monday 23rd February 2026!**

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.