

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

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



NEWSLETTER

20th July 2026



Well, it wasn't quite the end of term that we had planned, and after a long, hot and tiring academic year the visit from Ofsted in the final week took us all a little by surprise! However, despite being knee deep in 'Challenge Week' and busy finalising end of year activities and events, we warmly welcomed the HMI Lead Inspector and her team on Tuesday and Wednesday to spend time witnessing and experiencing our wonderful school. With 4 inspectors on the Tuesday and 3 on the Wednesday, all aspects of our school were closely scrutinised under the Ofsted inspection toolkit. Thank you to all those parents/carers who actively engaged with the inspection process, whether that be sending messages of support, completing the Parent View survey or speaking directly with members of the Ofsted team – we really do appreciate

your support. We now have to wait for our final inspection report which will be published after the summer holiday period, but needless to say the Governing Body and Senior Leadership Team were delighted with the feedback given to us on Wednesday afternoon. This remains strictly confidential until the draft report is agreed and finalised. We can't wait to share this with you and I am sure you will be as delighted and thrilled as we are! Watch this space...

Over the past few weeks we have been treated to a showcase of talents across our primary school. In the week of the 6th July 2026 we hosted our EYFS & Key Stage 1 Summer Concerts – '*A Wonderful World*' - which saw all our younger classes demonstrating and sharing their musical talents whilst performing in front of a live audience. Those of you who were able to attend will have been treated to a medley of songs, some new and others familiar. It was clear to see from the smiles 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 **Rock UK** and **Kids Inspire**. Across the three performances we raised **£626.72**

Towards the end of June, our children also had the opportunity to bring us musical entertainment at another wonderful concert, with our Key Stage 1 & Key Stage 2 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 **£195.01**

Earlier this month it was the turn of Year 6, who highly entertained us with two stunning performances of '*Peter Pan*'. The acting was superb, the singing wonderful, the props and scenery professionally produced and the collaborative teamwork was evidently on display. It made us laugh, it made us smile and we saw gifts and talents which had not necessarily been evident 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 **£403.28**

At our 'Mind, Body and Soul Charity Day' organised by our superb CATS reps we raised a further **£954.61** in donations and sponsorship.

Finally, our Year 6 children held their annual Charity Fair, which saw some entrepreneurial skills on display as various stalls and activities invited us to part with our money! I am sure we have some budding contestants for *The Apprentice*! Their hard work and effort raised a very impressive **£414.78**

That means that along with the earlier charity fundraising events this academic year we have raised a total of **£5,045.87** for our two chosen charities - Rock UK & Kids Inspire – you are all amazing! Thank you to everyone who has supported these events.



REMINDER: School Dinners – September 2026

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 2026.

As you will be fully aware, the cost of food, fuel, transportation and catering staff pay continues to increase year on year. After carefully reviewing our catering trading accounts and factoring in these increased costs it has been decided that school meals will increase to **£2.77** per day (£13.85 a week) from September 2026.

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. However, if you think you may be eligible for benefits related free school meals then please read the eligibility criteria on the school website or visit the Essex County Council website or contact the school office for further details and support.

Please be rest assured that this decision has not been taken lightly but we cannot operate our catering trading accounts at a loss.

ADVANCE NOTICE: When we return to school on Thursday 3rd September 2026 we will be starting on **WEEK 1** of the menu cycle.

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, we are still experiencing 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 became a statutory requirement from September 2024.

Our whole school attendance target for this academic year was 96%. Sadly we have missed this target with an end of year outcome of **94.0%**. This is very disappointing and even more so when you look at how this is broken down by year group:

YEAR GROUP	ATTENDANCE RATE
Reception/EYFS	90.6%
Year 1	93.8%
Year 2	93.9%
Year 3	94.1%
Year 4	94.1%
Year 5	95.6%
Year 6	95.2%

We understand that 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 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.

In the new academic year 2026-2027 we will continue to work with **Aquinas School Attendance Provisions** who will be undertaking school visits each half term to track and monitor our attendance data. They will also be conducting face-to-face school-based attendance meetings with parents/carers of children who we deem to have concerns about their irregular school attendance. Aquinas will offer 'early help' support-based strategies to help improve poor absence rates, before exploring more legislative options including the issuing of penalty notices.

Finally....

As we now 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 a number of longstanding members of staff. **Mrs Alison Hearn, Mrs Sophie Antrobus, Mrs Deb Finck and Mrs Katie Knight** are all 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 and work of the school. All of them will remain in our thoughts and prayers as they prepare to move on to new adventures and experiences.

In school, we have now successfully completed a wonderful **Challenge Week** across the primary school. 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. The theme for this year was based around 'Growth Mindset & Wellbeing'. 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.

On Thursday afternoon last week, the winners from EYFS, KS1 and KS2 were announced!

Congratulations to **RC** (Mrs Cassidy & Mrs Shephard) who were the EYFS winners.

The Key Stage 1 winners were **2K** (Mrs Brind)

The Key Stage 2 winners were **4Bu** (Mrs Burrus)

Last but by no means least, we were delighted to award **Golden House Point** pin badges to all the children in **St Patrick's House** who were our overall winners for the academic year 2026-2027!!

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 2026-2027 academic year on **Thursday 3rd September 2026**.

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.



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And...please remember if you have any questions or queries or comments feel free to contact us:
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