

# Thorncombe, St. Mary's CE Primary Academy



Living, Learning and Growing Together



Spring Term 25-26 Newsletter Issue: 18 Friday 30th January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Thank you for your understanding and support around Tuesday's school closure due to the weather. We never take the decision to close lightly, and the safety of our children, families and staff is always our priority. We are very grateful for the way families engaged with home learning on that day, and it was pleasing to be able to remain open for the rest of the week despite the additional rainfall.

As you will see from this week's photo gallery, the wintry weather provided a rich theme across many lessons, with children making the most of seasonal learning opportunities both indoors and out. It has been lovely to see their curiosity, creativity and resilience shine through.

We have also increased our focus on spelling at Thorncombe. Alongside online spelling games, we have introduced a new spelling programme called *Spelling Shed* to support good progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. This approach builds on the strong phonics foundations developed in earlier years and in Year 2, helping children to apply spelling patterns and strategies more confidently. If you have any questions about how best to support spellings at home, please do speak with your child's class teacher.

Finally, a reminder to please ensure you have booked your parent meeting if you have not already done so. Appointments are booked via Arbor, and teachers are looking forward to meeting with you to discuss your child's progress.

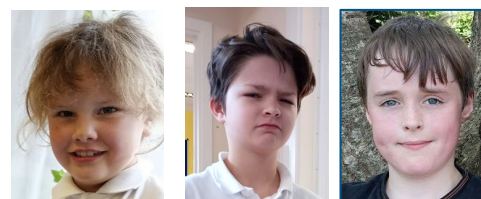
Thank you, as always, for your continued support.

Warm regards, Sal Davies

Our core value this term is:

*Service*

*Our golden apple winners this week are....*



The winning house this week:

*Silver Birch*

**W/B 02/02/26:**

**Year 6 - Mock SATS**

**Monday**

Breakfast club

Lego+Board games ASC:

3.15-4.30

**Tuesday**

Breakfast club: 8-8.30

Forest School Sessions

Bikes+Trikes ASC: 3.15-4.30

**Wednesday**

PFA AGM 2pm

Breakfast club: 8-8.30

PE Lessons

Sports Skills ASC: 3.15-4.30

**Thursday**

Breakfast club: 8-8.30

Creative ASC: 3.15-4.30

**Friday**

Breakfast Club: 8-8.30

Chromebooks ASC: 3.15-4.30

Please like, comment and share on our social media posts to spread the word of our wonderful school. Click below to be taken to them.



Quote of the week:

Do to others as you would have them do to

you

*Luke 6:31*



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# Class News from this Week!

## Little Acorns - Claire Stockford

This week in Little Acorns we have continued to explore people who help us. This week we have focused on Firefighters and what they do. Little Acorns have engaged in various activities to support their learning, we have turned our home corner area into a fire station, dressed up as firefighters and exploring and discussing real life pictures. We have so much fun exploring this topic and becoming firefighters this week.

We have explored numbers this and learning that anything can be counted. As we build towers we can count how many blocks, building a train track and counting trains. I have noticed Little Acorns very much enjoy counting especially when they initiate a game of hide and seek and take it turns to count! What superstars!

## Pippin Class - Mrs Wheaton

Over the past few weeks in computing with Mr Harris, the children have been using computers to create lists and design rockets using basic art tools. This week they built their rockets, and next week they will launch them, collect data and record their findings digitally.

In PE, we have continued our units on gymnastics and sending and receiving.

In gymnastics, all children created balances using shapes, with Reception focusing on core strength, Year 1 and 2 developing control, and Year 3 refining technique. They linked their balances to music, working in pairs, small groups and as a whole group.

In Science this week we have explored waterproof materials. We have made predictions on which materials will be waterproof and tested our ideas, building structures and choosing a material to act as the roof. Lots of the children made correct predictions!

## Orchard Class - Miss Taylor

In Maths this week, Year 3 and 4 explored measurement, comparing different units of length and using them to measure the school playground. Year 5 and 6 have moved on to fractions and have worked hard multiplying unit fractions and mixed numbers.

In Science, Year 3 and 4 investigated shadows and how they change when objects move closer to or further away from a light source. Year 5 and 6 learned all about metamorphosis by comparing the life cycles of amphibians and insects, they researched their own insect for their diagrams..

In Geography, Orchard Class explored altitudinal bands and mountain features at different heights, producing some lovely diagrams to show their understanding.

Well done to all the children for their enthusiasm and effort this week!

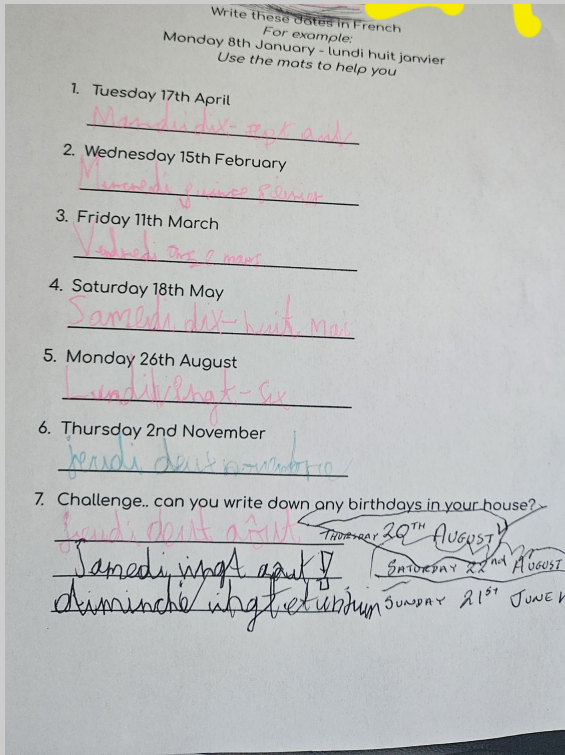
## Over the next week...

- Hear your child read at least 3 times each week. Please record this in their reading records/BoomReader. Parents - children are never too old to have a story read to them. They gain so much from this special time with you.
- Practise your multiplication and division facts using TTRS or other resources.

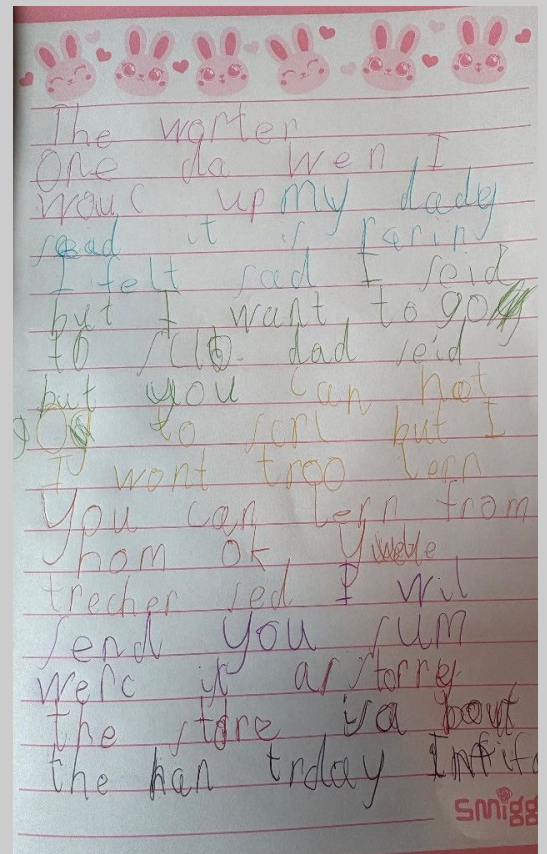
Year 1	2s, 5s, 10s
Year 2	2s, 5s, 10s
Year 3	3s, 4s, 8s
Year 4, 5 and 6	all multiplication tables up to 12x12

Children learn  
**4,000 to 12,000**  
words per year  
through reading.

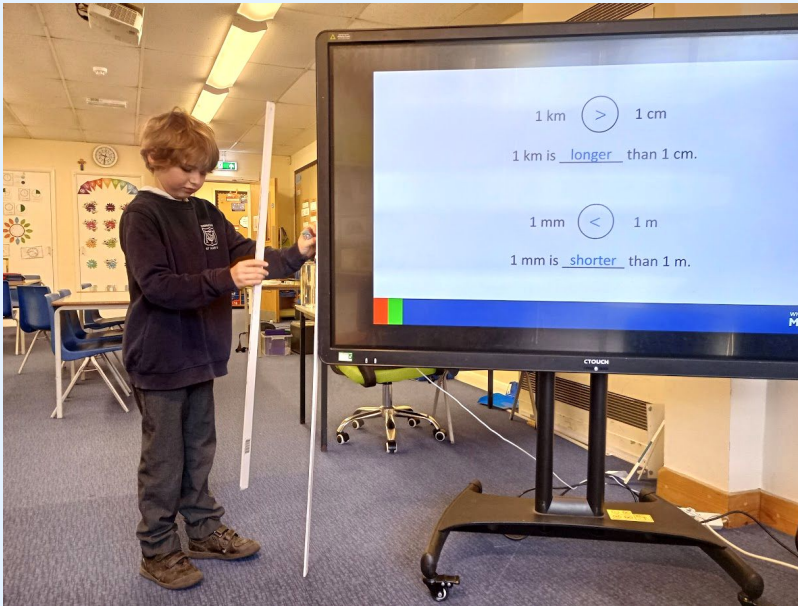
# Storm Changra!



Although we had to close on Tuesday due to the weather, it was brilliant to see so much fantastic learning taking place at home! Thank you for sending in your work. Well done everyone!



# What a lovely week!



In Art, Pippin class have been exploring texture. Last week they used materials to create textured paper based on a picture of their choice. This week they used those to create a collage. They look fab!



# What a lovely week!



# Maths games!



The game might look the same but the learning is so different!

Reception have been quickly recognising the patterns on the dice and circled the number of dots.

Year 1 & 2 have been rolling a dice with larger numbers and hoping for an even number to create an array. They then wrote the multiplication. They were challenged to find different multiplication sentences for the same number.

# 10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

## ENCOURAGING OPEN CONVERSATIONS AT HOME

With tricky topics and occasional clashes of opinion, it can be challenging to maintain an environment where children feel able to talk candidly and honestly. However, encouraging such conversations helps to develop trust – making it easier to unpack even sensitive subjects as children get older. Here are our top tips for promoting open conversations at home.

- 1 CREATE A SAFE SPACE**

Criticism, blaming or shaming can all prevent children from feeling emotionally safe – while showing affection, positive attention and an interest in what a child has to say builds their sense of security. These formative years are when children's opinions and values begin to take shape, so it's important to provide a non-judgmental environment in which to discuss them – especially if their opinions differ from your own.
- 2 CONSIDER OTHER OUTLETS**

Some children may find it easier to talk while they're participating in another activity such as drawing, writing, walking or sport. If it's possible, taking part in these activities together presents you with an opportunity to communicate while doing something side by side. A child may feel less pressure that way and can be more inclined to open up of their own accord.
- 3 NORMALISE CHATS ABOUT FEELINGS**

Incorporate mental health and emotional wellbeing into everyday conversations, using age-appropriate language and examples to help children understand their emotions. Ask questions like "How are you feeling today?", "What was the best and worst part of your day?", "If you could start today again, what would you do differently?" and "Is there anything you want to talk about?"
- 4 LISTEN ACTIVELY**

When children express themselves, make it obvious that you're listening closely and giving them your full attention. Maintain eye contact and validate their feelings without immediately trying to solve the problem. It's not helpful to dismiss their issues as childish or teenage angst – or to assume that they're simply 'got over' whatever they're feeling. Children don't have your life experience; their resilience is still developing as they learn to push through difficulties and handle problems.
- 5 ASK OPEN QUESTIONS**

Encourage children to share their thoughts by asking open questions about their feelings and experiences. Closed questions (such as "Did you enjoy school today?") are more likely to elicit a simple "yes" or "no" response. Instead, you could ask things like "Who did you spend time with at break?" or "Who did you sit with at lunchtime?"
- 6 RESPECT THEIR BOUNDARIES**

If a child isn't ready to talk to about something yet, respect their boundaries: this reinforces that their feelings are important and worthy of consideration. Ideally, you're aiming to let them know you care without smothering them, so just make it clear that you're there for them whenever they're ready to chat. Gentle, regular check-ins can sometimes be the best form of progress.
- 7 LEAD BY EXAMPLE**

Model open, honest and healthy communication in front of children and young people. Try to demonstrate kindness when talking about others and yourself because if children hear adults being overly harsh, critical or judgmental, or see them having unrealistic expectations of themselves, it makes them more likely to adopt and repeat this behaviour themselves as they grow.
- 8 HAVE REGULAR CHECK-INS**

Check in with children periodically to discuss how they're feeling and what's going on in their lives. This could be a weekly or monthly conversation, where the child has an opportunity to share whatever's on their mind. For parents and carers, getting away from the house and other distractions might be productive here; you could consider regular trips to a coffee shop or a cafe, or just a weekly walk.
- 9 PROVIDE RESOURCES**

It's often beneficial to let children know about other support that's available to them if they're struggling to talk to you specifically. Encourage them to talk to school counsellors, trusted adults or even a therapist, if necessary – while normalising this route and dispelling the harmful stigma around asking for help. Older children could engage with resources such as Kooth or YoungMinds.
- 10 CELEBRATE EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION**

It's beneficial to praise children for expressing their feelings honestly – emphasising how important it is to talk about their emotions and how proud you are of them for doing so. This can be especially pivotal for boys, who often experience more of a stigma around talking frankly about their feelings and their mental health – a barrier that can be overcome, with enough love and support.

**Meet Our Expert**

With 30 years' experience as a teacher, trainer, consultant and interim executive board member, Anna Bateman has a superb understanding of what works in pedagogy, school improvement and leadership. She has also advised the Department for Education on their mental health green paper.



**#WakeUpWednesday**

The National College

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Mental Health Support Services:  
[Dorset Support](#)    [Somerset Support](#)    [Devon Support](#)

### Safeguarding Information

Mrs Sal Davies  
Acting Head of School  
Designated  
Safeguarding Lead



Mrs Merryn Wheaton  
EYFS Lead and Pippin  
Teacher  
Deputy DSL



Our child protection policy can be found [here](#).