

# Thorncombe, St. Mary's CE Primary Academy



Living, Learning and Growing Together



Spring Term 25-26 Newsletter Issue: 16 Friday 16th January 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Since returning to school this term, we have placed a renewed focus on reading, including the relaunch of Accelerated Reader (AR) for pupils in Key Stage 2. This has been supported expertly by Mrs Hodder, our AR Champion, and is already helping to promote reading for pleasure and progress.

Reading at home continues to play an important role. Little and often works well, helping children build confidence while also sharing valuable time together and reinforcing the message that reading matters.

Useful links for families:

- Oxford Owl: <https://home.oxfordowl.co.uk/>
- Accelerated Reader – Parent Information: <https://www.renaissance.com/family-resources-accelerated-reader/>

It is with great sadness that I reflect on the passing of Patricia Barnes, a much-loved member of our community and former Chair of Governors at Thorncombe School. Patricia was a passionate champion of the school and worked tirelessly to support its positive impact. Our thoughts are with her family and friends at this difficult time, and they remain in our prayers.

Thank you 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:

*English Oak*

W/B 19/01/26:

Monday

**Y4-6 Dodgeball @ Woodroffe**

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

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

**PFA non-uniform Day**

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:

Always have a willing hand to help someone, you might be the only one that does.

Roy T. Bennett



St. Mary's CE Primary Academy, Chard Street, Thorncombe, Somerset, TA20 4NE

Phone: [01460 30535](tel:0146030535) Email: [office@stmarysthorncombe.dorset.sch.uk](mailto:office@stmarysthorncombe.dorset.sch.uk)

Website: <https://www.stmarysthorncombe.dorset.sch.uk/>



# Class News from this Week!

## Little Acorns - Claire Stockford

This week, Little Acorns have really enjoyed our story of the week "There's a superhero in your book". The children have found this story so funny and have started to join in parts of the story and predict what happens next. They have all become their very own superheroes by making superhero masks and discussing what a superhero might do.

We have explored marble painting this week and mixing colours together.

We went on an adventurous winter wellie walk, exploring the ice on the field. The children were so fascinated by finding so many frozen leaves! Little Acorns have also loved listening to stories on the Tonie box, playing games with friends and learning how to use tools safely in Forest school.

## Pippin Class - Mrs Wheaton

In PSHE this term, we are exploring Dreams and Goals. This week, we spoke about carrying on trying even when things feel difficult. The children shared lots of ideas on how we can continue to persevere at school and in life, such as when we fall over or if we get something wrong. We spoke about how it's important that we learn from our mistakes, as that helps us grow!

In PE, we played a game of 'roller ball' where children had to work in teams against each other to score points by rolling balls through targets.

In Art, we have been exploring texture. We used different materials to create different-looking textures, such as using a brush, cotton wool, tissue paper, and netting. Year 3 had a go at re-creating texture from a photograph.

Have a wonderful weekend. Please remember to read together at home and record this in reading books.

## Orchard Class - Miss Taylor

This half term in Geography, children are exploring mountains. This week, they located key mountain ranges around the world on a map and explained the different ways mountains are formed.

Year 5 and 6 have worked extremely hard on long and short division, using efficient strategies to solve complex problems. Year 3 and 4 have shown fantastic thinking skills in multiplication and can confidently use the written method in lessons.

In PE, children are developing their handball skills, practising chest, bounce, shoulder passes, and controlled dribbling. They have begun learning how to intercept the ball and take possession from opponents.

In RE, children are exploring the question, "What kind of King is Jesus?" This week, they learned about the Parable of the Great Banquet, which teaches that God welcomes everyone into His kingdom.

## 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.

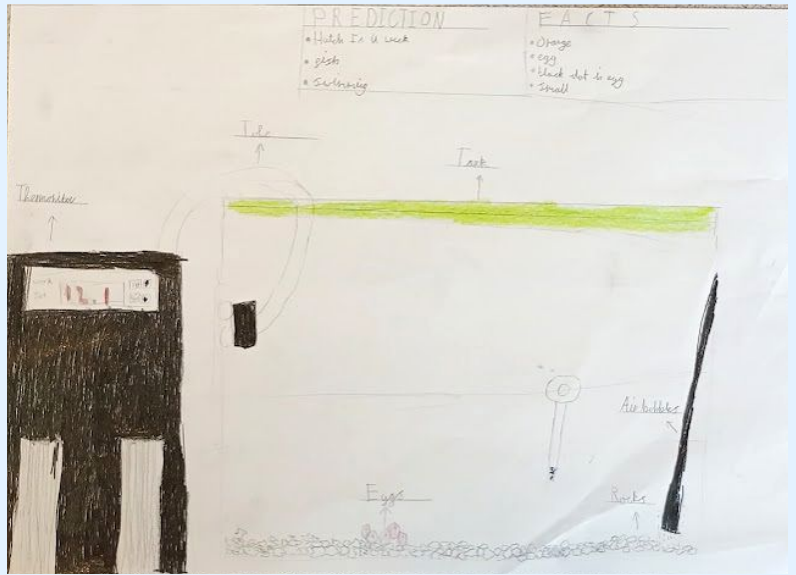
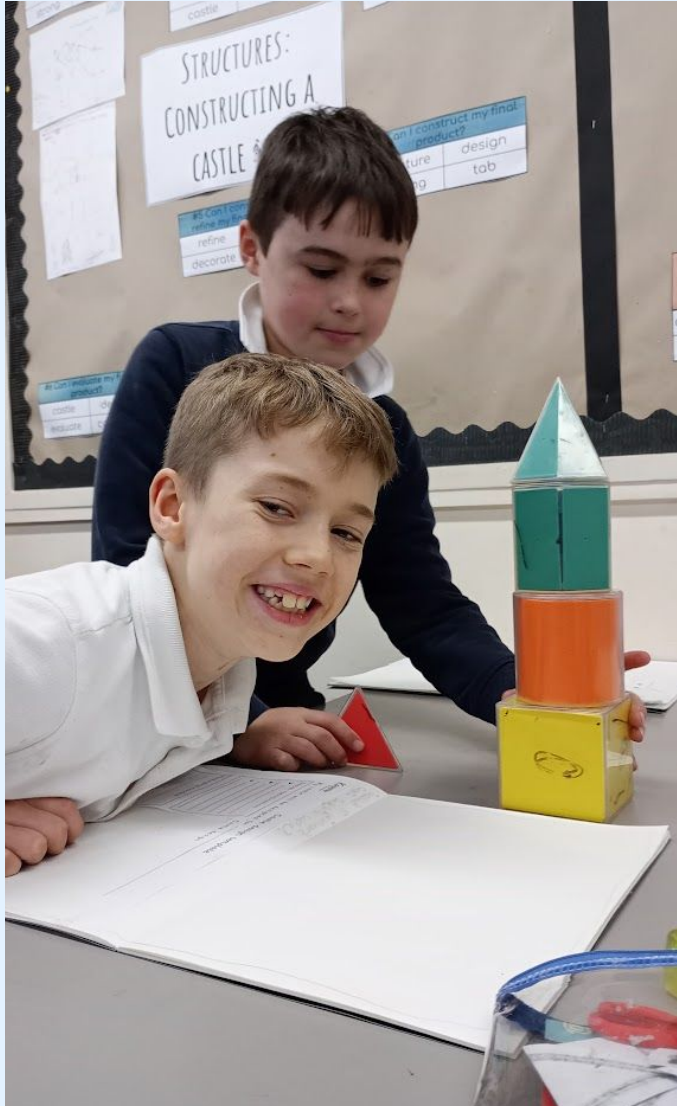
Year 1	2s, 5s, 10s
Year 2	2s, 5s, 10s
Year 3	3s, 4s, 8s
Year 4, 5 and 6	all multiplication tables up to 12x12

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

# What a lovely week!



# What a lovely week!



**Kapow Primary** Castle design template

My castle will be designed for a  fairy

**Design specification**

- ▶ Drawbridge
- ▶ Strong and Stable
- ▶ Flag with flower

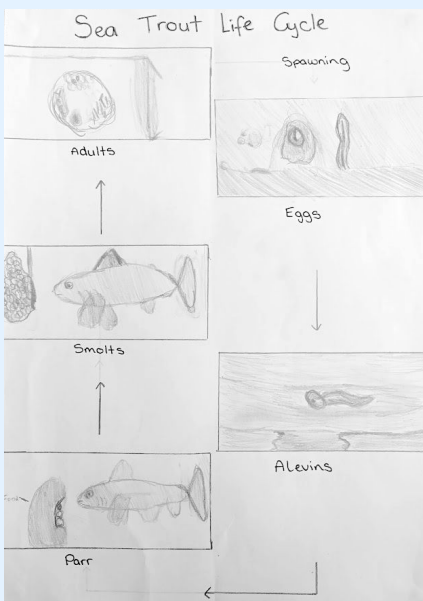
**Packaging needed**

Lichen roll Gabe or Gola  
Por Eups, 3D shape net

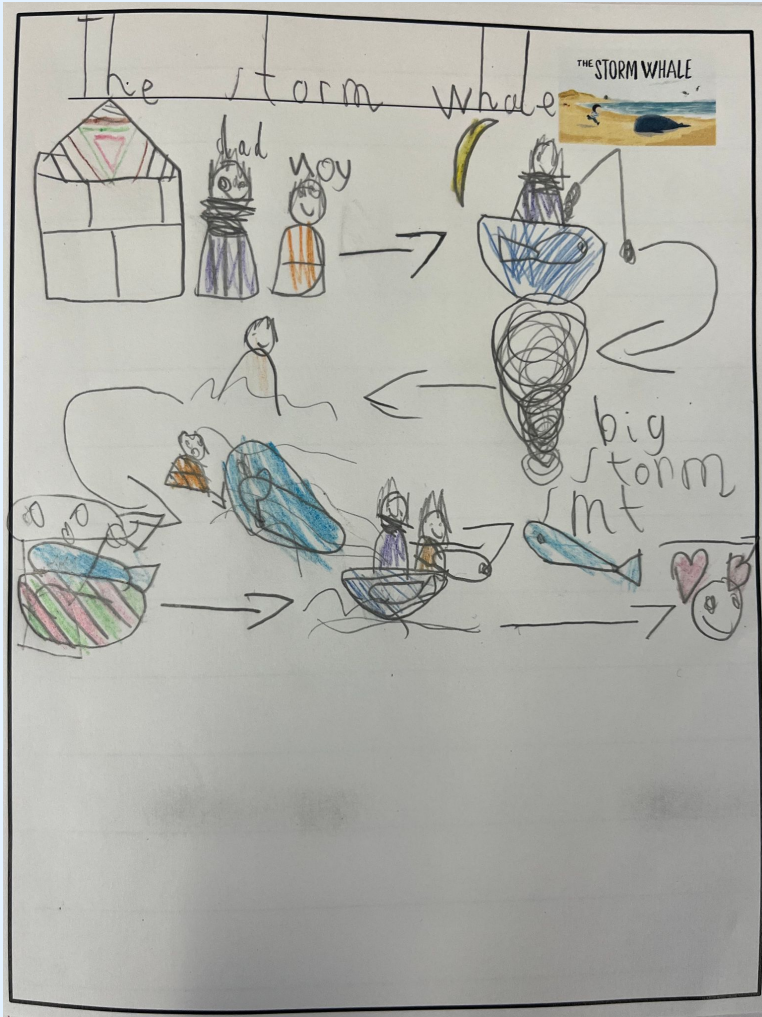
**Castle design**

# Orchard Trout project

Today Orchard children were treated to a visit from Harry who is part of Rivers Run Through Us Trust. It is the third year we have had fish in the classroom from AVRA - the Axe Valley River Association and the children absolutely love it! This year we are observing our fish as part of the year 5 and 6 Science unit on Living Things and their Habitats. Harry explained all about the life cycle of the fish, the different stages of growing and the spawning process. The children really enjoyed their learning and are looking forward to monitoring the development over the next few weeks.



# What a lovely week!

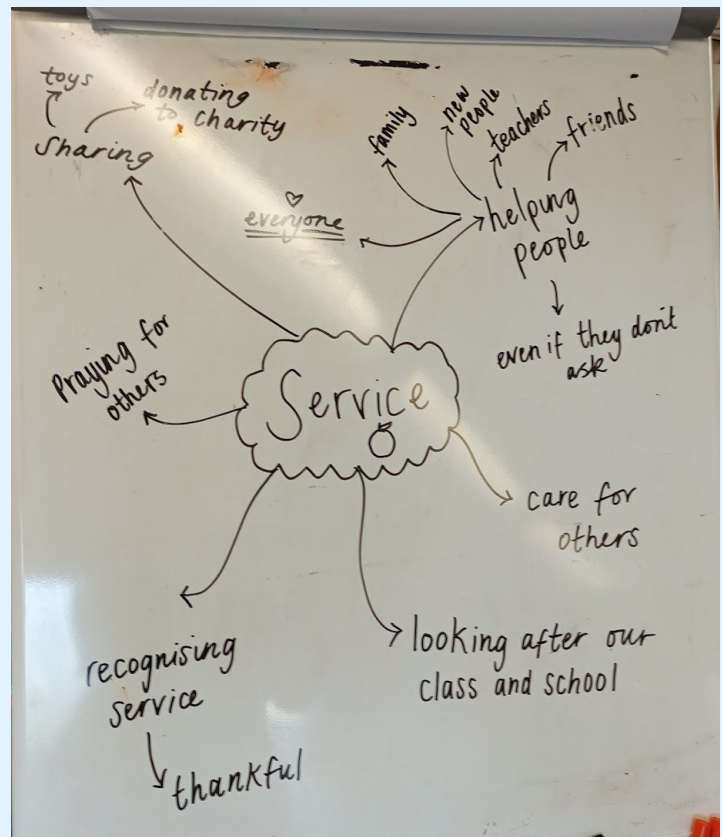


Year 1 English - story map to learn the story 'The Storm Whale'

Boxing-up helps writers break a story into parts so we know what to write and when. We are going to box up the story of The Storm Whale.

	What happens?	Where is the setting?	How does Noi feel?
Opening	There's a boy who lives in a cosy house with his dad and six cats dad, noi, cats	In his cosy house 	<u>calm</u> and peaceful 
Build up	his dad goes fishing on a boat 	in his cosy house and the clam beach 	lonely + sad 
Problem	a big storm 	the sea and stormy night angry sea	scared, <del>bee</del> and worried because his dad is in the sea!
Resolution	the noi finds the <u>whale</u> and helps it	on he saw it in distance on the beach 	brave + kind 
Ending	the <u>whale</u> goes back home	in the <u>calm</u> sea on a sunny day	proud + happy 

Year 3 'boxing up' process to learn the story structure of 'The Storm Whale'



# RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch

After helping mammals, amphibians and minibeasts last year, Eco Council has chosen to focus on 'Birds' this Spring. For starters the children are keen to get everyone to sign up to take part in the RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch, the world's largest garden wildlife survey. [Register here](#) and spend just one hour watching the birds in your patch, between 23 and 25 January, and record the birds that land.



At The National College, our WakeUpWednesday guides empower and equip parents, carers and educators with the confidence and practical skills to be able to have informed and age-appropriate conversations with children about online safety, mental health and wellbeing, and climate change. Formerly delivered by National Online Safety, these guides now address wider topics and themes. For further guides, hints and tips, please visit [nationalcollege.com](http://nationalcollege.com).

# What Parents & Educators Need to Know about DIGITAL DEVICES & WELLBEING

Children aged 7 to 14 now spend roughly 3 to 5 hours a day on phones, tablets, consoles, and computers. That much screen time has parents and educators worried – not just about the hours logged, but about online safety and the knock-on effects on mental health. This guide brings together practical, expert-backed strategies so adults can nurture healthier digital habits and help young people thrive both on and offline.

## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

### SLEEP DISRUPTION

Excessive screen time, especially before bed, can interfere with melatonin production and delay sleep onset. Children may struggle to concentrate or regulate emotions due to poor sleep hygiene linked to late-night device use.

### ONLINE PEER PRESSURE

Social media platforms expose children to unrealistic standards and peer validation loops. Likes, comments, and follower counts can influence self-worth and lead to anxiety or risky behaviour to gain approval.

### CYBERBULLYING EXPOSURE

Children may encounter bullying through messaging apps, games, or social media. This can be persistent and anonymous, making it harder to detect. Victims often feel isolated and reluctant to report incidents.

### REDUCED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Time spent on screens often replaces outdoor play and physical activity. This sedentary lifestyle can contribute to obesity, poor posture, and reduced cardiovascular health.

### EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION

Fast-paced digital content can overstimulate young brains. Children may become irritable, impatient, or struggle with boredom and emotional control when not engaged with screens.

### PRIVACY AND SAFETY RISKS

Children may unknowingly share personal information or interact with strangers online. Without guidance, they may not understand the long-term consequences of digital footprints or unsafe online behaviour.

## 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](#).