

Thorncombe, St. Mary's CE Primary Academy



Living, Learning and Growing Together



Autumn Term 26-27 Newsletter Issue: 5 Friday 9th October 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been another busy week in school, with both our flu vaccinations and school photographs taking place. The children approached these with maturity, and their behaviour while being out of their usual routines was exemplary. We were incredibly proud of how calmly and sensibly they handled both occasions.

In Collective Worship this week, children have explored the Parable of Words, thinking about the message in Proverbs 18:21 that our words have power. We talked about how the things we say can have a lasting impact on others, and how we can choose to use our words to encourage, build up and show kindness rather than hurt or bring others down.

The children have also been learning about the five British Values: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. I wonder if they can remember these to tell you at home?

Today, we have come together as a school to celebrate Hello Yellow, a campaign which encourages conversations about mental health and reminds us that it is okay to talk about how we are feeling. Our mental health ambassadors prepared a Worship beforehand which they then delivered to the whole school. It is wonderful to have such caring ambassadors in school that children can lean on.

Mrs Jessica Evans
Head of School

Our core value this term is:

Love & Compassion

Our golden apple winners for this week.



The winning house this week:

Silver Birch

W/B 05.10.2026

Monday

R/1/2 PE

Tuesday

Forest School

R/1/2/3 PE

Wednesday

Music Lessons

Home Learning club

4/5/6 PE

Thursday

Orchard Home Learning due

Friday

4/5/6 PE

*Daily Breakfast Club | 8-8:30am
A relaxed start to the day with
breakfast and play.*

*Daily After School Club | 3:15-4:30pm
Child-led play and activities based on
children's interests.*

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.



BE
KIND
TO YOUR
MIND



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Class News from this Week!

Little Acorns - Claire Stockford

Little Acorns' Book of the Week has been The Colour Monster. The children have explored key vocabulary such as happy, sad, worried, calm, excited and angry, talking about the different things that can make us feel these emotions and beginning to recognise and express their own feelings. They have also been enjoying lots of stories, songs and rhymes together, including favourites such as If You're Happy and You Know It and Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes. These are a lovely way to develop children's listening, communication and language skills while having lots of fun! It has been wonderful to see the children becoming much more familiar with our Little Acorns routines and increasingly confident within their learning environment.

Pippin Class - Mrs Wheaton

In PSHE, we have been learning about our hopes and fears, rights and responsibilities, and what it means to be a member of our class and school. This week, Reception explored acceptable and unacceptable behaviours, while Year 1 and 2 thought about rewards and consequences. We discussed how our rights come with responsibilities and what might happen when we do, or don't, make positive choices.

Reception have also been working really hard in phonics, learning their sounds, blending and beginning to put sounds together to make words using their word tiles. I'm so proud of their enthusiasm and love for Fred the Frog! It has been great to see the children showing you their cards at home too. Thank you for adding this onto tapestry!

A quick reminder that Reception's library books are to be returned on a Friday after all children have been dismissed, ready to choose a new one for the week!

Have a wonderful weekend!

Orchard Class - Miss Taylor & Mrs Balcer

In English, Orchard class have been learning about the features of a non-chronological report. They have used their geography learning to pick out important facts about the UK. The children have been fabulous at using geographical vocabulary and remembering important place names.

In Maths, year 3 and 4 have been rounding to the nearest 10, 100 and 1,000. The children were so focussed and could confidently explain how to use their place value skills to solve fluency questions. Year 5 and 6 have moved onto addition and subtraction and have been making multiple exchanges with the formal written method of subtraction.

In RE we continued our learning on Hinduism and learnt about Ganesh, we read the story of how he became one of the most important Hindu deities and observed the symbolism in the images of Ganesh.

In our class worship on Wednesday we thought about saying something kind or encouraging to someone we know. The class came up with some lovely notes explaining what makes people special.

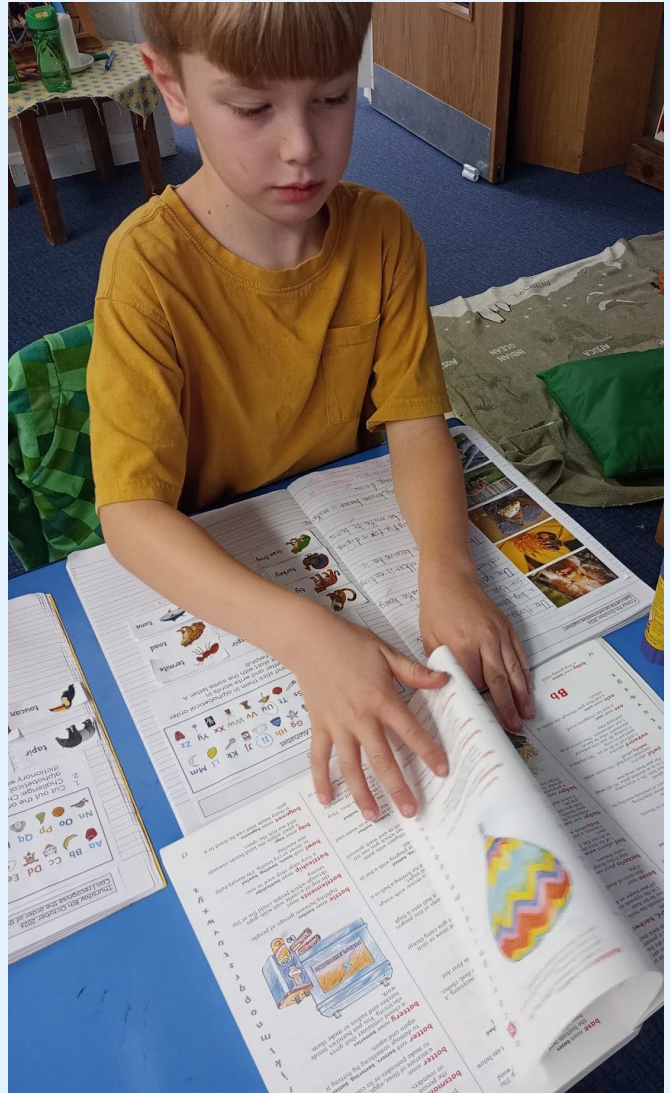
Over the next week...

- Hear your child read at least 3 times each week. Please record this in their reading records. 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.

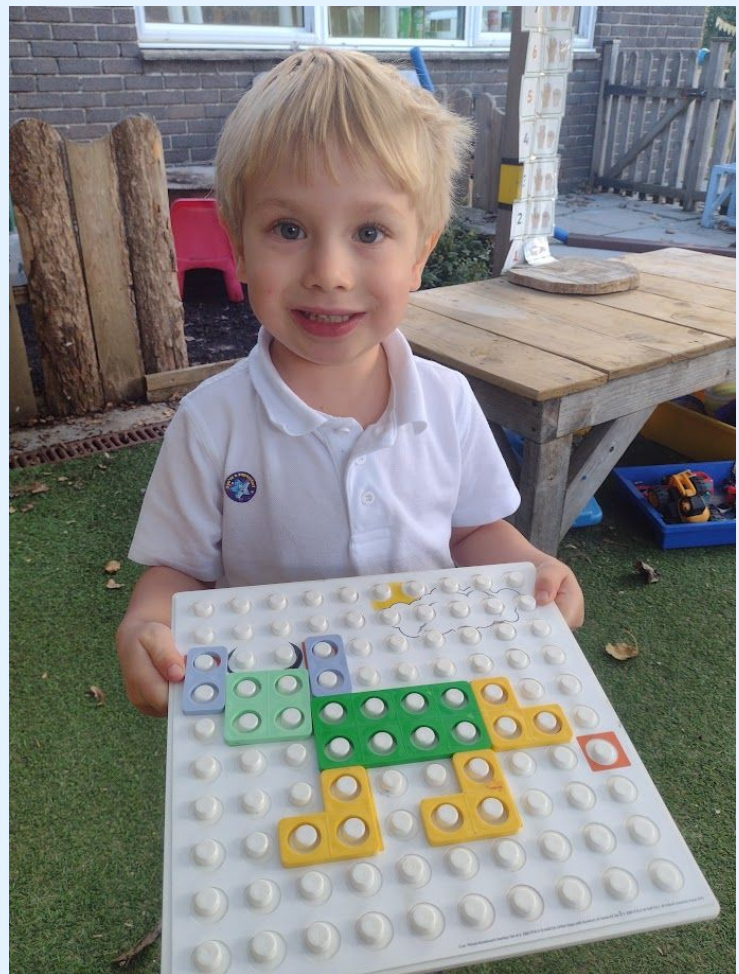
What a lovely week!



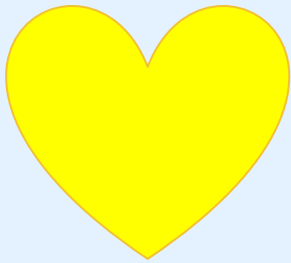
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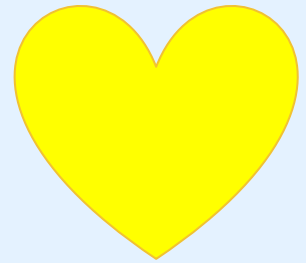
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#HelloYellow
YOUNG MINDS



💛 Hello Yellow! 💛

Our Mental Health Ambassadors were absolutely amazing this morning as they led a special *Hello Yellow* worship to celebrate World Mental Health Day! 🌟

They were so enthusiastic when preparing their worship and delivered it with such confidence, helping us all to remember how important it is to look after our mental health, support one another and spread a little sunshine. 🌟

We are so proud of them for sharing such an important message with our school community. 💛

#HelloYellow #WorldMentalHealthDay #MentalHealthMatters
#OrchardClass 🌻

Top Tips for SETTING BOUNDARIES AROUND GAMING

If your child loves video games, then you'll probably be aware that how long they spend gaming – and what they're actually playing – can occasionally become a source of concern or conflict. The UK's trade body for interactive entertainment, Ukie, has recently launched a campaign to promote safer and more responsible gaming among young people – with parents and carers helping by setting sensible and fair boundaries. Our guide has tips on key areas where you could agree some healthy ground rules for your child's gaming activity.

PROMOTE SAFER GAME CHOICES

Deciding which online games are OK – and which should be avoided – is tricky. Some titles allow children to cooperate or compete with strangers, which creates potential risks. Watching your child play online for a while could provide more insight into a particular game, while the parental controls on most consoles allow you to limit who can chat to your child or send them friend requests. Remind your child of the hazards around strangers online when you discuss this boundary with them.

ENCOURAGE REGULAR BREAKS

Help your child understand the need to take regular breaks, playing in shorter bursts rather than marathon sessions. Bear in mind that some games (such as role-playing games) require time investment from the player, while others (online team games, for example) can't be stopped or paused at a moment's notice. A quick break every hour or so is good practice, and you could suggest some things to do in these breaks, such as having a drink of water or getting some fresh air.

AGREE SPENDING LIMITS

There's no doubt that gaming can be expensive, and younger players often don't realise how much paying for digital items and subscriptions can add up to. Many young gamers love to buy new skins or upgrades for their character, so you could settle on a fixed amount that your child is allowed to spend on in-game items each week or month. This sort of boundary will not only help your child to manage their expectations but will also make you more aware of the price of these items.

DISCUSS AGE RATINGS

Children often ignore the age ratings on games – or are unaware they even exist. If you're happy with your child playing a particular game even though it's rated above their age, then establish that as a boundary: emphasise that you've made an exception, and talk about what age ratings mean and why they're important. You could add context to this boundary by browsing games' boxes together while shopping, discussing why some games might have earned certain age ratings.

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CENSORED

Meet Our Expert

Daniel Lipscombe is a writer specialising in technology, video gaming, virtual reality and Web3. He has also written 16 guidebooks for children, covering games such as Fortnite, Apex Legends, Valorant, Roblox and Minecraft. With work published by the likes of PC Gamer, Kotaku, Pocket Gamer and VOXX, he has reviewed more than 50 games and products over the past year.

Source: <https://hipol.app/about/privacy.html>

FACTOR IN FRIENDS

If your child is a keen video gamer, the chances are that they'll have other gamers among their social circle. So, when friends visit, do they instantly dash to their console or computer? You could put boundaries in place before their guests arrive by agreeing on a length of gaming time. Bear in mind, though, that they may try to extend this once they're together. Try coming up with activities or challenges for them during screen breaks – if they join in, they earn a little extra time on their game.

ENJOY GAMING TOGETHER

Setting time aside to play video games together can be an enjoyable bonding exercise. Undeniably, some young gamers may be less enthusiastic about a parent or carer joining in, but it can be a productive way of encouraging them to share their hobby with you. Setting goals or tasks might be useful: if they love Minecraft, choose something to build together; if Fortnite's their favourite, ask to try out some of the fun game modes, like Prop Hunt, which don't require high skill levels.

TALK ABOUT EMOTIONS

Help your child to monitor their emotions as they play. Discuss what is (and isn't) an acceptable level of competitiveness to show while gaming. Are they allowed to trash talk other players, for example? Can they notice when they get angry if they lose? Do they think these emotions are healthy? Some games can provoke anger, but others can bring joy, humour and the thrill of overcoming a challenge. Try to steer your child towards games that tend to produce these more positive feelings.

BE PREPARED FOR TROLLS

A frequent problem when gaming online is other players who are deliberately troublesome. Make sure your child knows how to report and block someone who makes their experience a negative one. Between you, decide if or how they should deal with these online trolls. Talk about where your child's boundaries are in terms of what they think is acceptable: what behaviour by other users is merely frustrating, and what crosses the line to become upsetting or abusive.

NOS National Online Safety®
#WakeUpWednesday

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@national_online_safety

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 13.09.2023

Safeguarding Information

Mrs Jessica Evans
Head of School
Designated Safeguarding Lead



Mrs Merryn Wheaton
EYFS Lead and Pippin
Teacher
Deputy DSL



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