



William Gilbert Endowed
(Church of England)
Primary School & Nursery
Vicarage Lane, Duffield, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 4EB
Telephone & Fax: 01332 840395
E-mail: enquiries@williamgilbertend.derbyshire.sch.uk
Headteacher: Mrs E H Britten



NEWSLETTER

12th December 2025

No. 633

Dear Parents

Thank you to all parents who attended the Infant concert 'Midwife Crisis'. Your support and kind comments were very much appreciated by the staff and children. Can I remind you that if you would like to purchase a link to view the recording of the concert, please log onto your Scopay account and make the £6 payment by Thursday 18th December. This cost raises no profit for school funds, it is necessary to cover the cost we have incurred by the company which totals £200.

Reindeer Dash Day – Wednesday 10th December

Thank you to everyone who supported our Christmas Jumper and Reindeer Dash this week. It was lovely to see all the children in their reindeer antlers as they ran around the playground. Y1-Y6 all managed to walk, run or prance a mile around the playground. Nursery and Reception had lots of Reindeer active fun in the afternoon too. If you have not done so already, please send in your sponsorship form and money into school before next Friday ideally, but at the latest by **Monday 12th January**.

New arrivals

We would like to take the opportunity to welcome Mr Scully to our school as Catering Supervisor. This week the children and staff enjoyed a delicious Christmas dinner with all the trimmings.

Congratulations to Mr and Mrs Kibble who welcomed the safe arrival of a baby boy earlier this week. Mum, Dad and baby are doing well and looking forward to their first Christmas together. Mrs Kibble would like to thank all the pupils and parents who generously put together a baby hamper for her. She was overwhelmed by your kindness.

Carol Service

Further to my previous letter, may I remind you that our Carol Service is next Tuesday, 16th December at St Alkmund's Church at 2.00pm.

Parking at the Bridge Inn is welcomed and has the kind permission of the Landlord. However, if you are using the pub car park, please park away from the entrance area. Where possible, please walk or share lifts. **Please do not park on the narrow drive leading down to the church car park area.** Your support would be greatly appreciated, and I would be grateful if you could share this information with grandparents and others who are likely to attend.

All children are to go home directly from the Church at approximately 3.00pm if you are attending the service, and 3.10pm if you are not. Therefore, on Tuesday afternoon, all children need to be picked up at the Church or be clear about their going home arrangements. Unless I am informed in writing that your child is to return to school to be dismissed at 3.30pm, it will be assumed that your child will go home from Church and will understand their arrangements.

It will be easier to bring as few bags as possible on Tuesday, so there is less to carry to Church, with packed lunches in disposable packaging and **infant children not requiring their book bags.**

GOING HOME ARRANGEMENTS FROM CHURCH

PARENTS ATTENDING THE SERVICE – 3.00PM

Once the Year 5 and 6 children have left the Church and walked to the Church Hall to collect their coats, parents who are attending the service will be able to collect their child from:-

Reception – The choir stalls

Year 1 & 2 – The pews near the vestry door

Year 3 & 4 – The chairs near the organ

Year 5 & 6 – The Church Hall – wait in the Vestibule near the toilets and kitchen

Parents attending the service need to leave as swiftly as possible from the church site, so that we can then reunite children with parents who have not attended.

Parents who are not attending the service, and are waiting outside, can then come into collect their child/children from the designated areas detailed above at **3:10pm**.

Christmas Parties – Thursday 18th December

A reminder that children may wear their own clothes rather than uniform on Christmas party day, which is Thursday 18th December for Nursery, KS1 and KS2. As detailed in our school uniform policy make-up is not permitted. We have observed a small number of pupils beginning to wear make-up (lipstick and/or mascara) this is not permitted or appropriate for our primary aged children in school. I am reluctant at this stage to reflect secondary school approaches which can be to provide wipes to children to remove make-up. I hope this gentle reminder and your support with this matter will suffice. For safety reasons, any Christmas/party themed earrings worn must be studs and not hoop or dangling earrings. Thank you for your support.

Non-Uniform Day / Christmas / Festive Dress – Friday 19th December

For our final day of this autumn term, children are invited to dress up in Christmas festive outfits. This is optional, and children can just come in their own clothes if they do not want to dress up. Christmas jumpers are also an option for those that wish to participate. Please note that the PTA will be awarding prizes for the best dressed!

The day will end with carols around the tree. All pupils and staff come together to sing a range of Christmas classics – The 12 Days of Christmas is a sight and sound to behold!

School Uniform

The school holidays is a good opportunity to check school shoes and trainers still fit your child's growing feet and ensure children return in the New Year with appropriate school shoes.

Please note that there will be no PE taking place in school next week

Attendance

As a school we are duty bound by the DfE and our academy trust, DDAT, to monitor pupil attendance. As part of this monitoring and in line with our attendance policy, when children have missed more than 5 days of school, internal monitoring commences, and we will write to parents to inform them of this.

We will communicate school absence based on the number of days missed.

When children miss school, they can fall behind in their learning. We want to make sure your child gets the best education possible. Being in school every day on time makes sure they learn, make friends, and prepare for the future.

Sometimes children need to stay home when they are sick, and we understand this. However, for minor illnesses like a cough or cold without a fever, children can usually still attend school. If you are not sure, please contact us for more help. We are here to support you. We are mindful that for many families there are genuine illnesses behind the falling attendance levels, and we thank those families for keeping the children at home when they are too ill to be in school, especially when the illness will have an impact on other children's health.

As per our medication policy, it is the parents' responsibility to assess whether their child is fit to attend school. A range of attendance letters will be emailed to parents before the end of term. It is always our aim to listen to families and understand the barriers to attendance and work together to remove them. Please bear this in mind, if you receive a letter and know we are here to support you if needed.

I am pleased to report that I have sent almost 20 celebratory letters to families, thanking them for their support and commitment to improving their child's school attendance.

Musical Success

What a wonderful term of music we have had. This term pupils have had the opportunity to sing within our normal calendar of events such as harvest festival and the Christmas carol service. Our school choir, that is open to all, have represented our school with maturity and excellence. I am very proud to share that they have been involved in the following events:

- Rainbows Christmas Celebration Concert at Derby Cathedral
- Christmas Carols at the Duffield Fab Forgetful Friends, Dementia Café

After School Clubs

After School Clubs will restart week commencing 5th January, apart from the Art & Craft Club that restarts 12th January. If you have not already done so, please log into Parent Pay via your WEDUC app to register and pay for clubs, by Thursday 18th December, so Mrs Manners has time to confirm attendance.

Chess Club

I am delighted to share that I have found a parent who is willing to support Mr Barke and myself run a chess club. Thank you, Mr Bacon, for offering to support this popular club. Further communication has been shared regarding this club that will run on a Friday after school. The first session will be **Friday 16th January**.

Artist of the Month and Belper Festival 2026

Artist of the Month winners for November

Congratulations to Evelyn Paszek in EYFS, Sidney Hambley in KS1, and Amelie Penny in KS2, their superb entries were inspired by artist Andy Warhol. Thank you to all the pupils who entered and created such bold and colourful works of art. All art work will be on display in our school art gallery and all entries receive an artist postcard as recognition of their creativity.

Artist of the month is a competition that runs in school. Each month we look at a different artist and their work, children can then respond to this artist by either creating a picture, taking a photograph, writing a story, doing some research or a different response that inspires them. The artist of the month winner will be announced at the end of each month.

To enter you need to respond to the artist however you choose. Put your entry into the 'Artist of the Month' basket next to the art gallery display or email it to enquiries@williamgilbertend.derbyshire.sch.uk with the title 'Artist of the Month'. Please enter by Friday 30th January 2026. Further information about the Artist of the Month for December/January can be found here <https://www.williamgilbertend.derbyshire.sch.uk/art/>

This month's artist is: local artist **James D. Preston**

We have selected James D. Preston as he is a local artist who often paints images of Belper. 2026 is a big year for Belper and the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site. It is the 250th anniversary of the first cotton mill opening in Belper. Visit the webpage for more information [Belper 250 Festival - 2026 - Derwent Valley Mills](#). The Belper and Duffield Rotary is once again holding an exciting Arts competition for children and young people, aged 5-17 years. Full details, rules and entry forms can be found on the following website www.you-create.co.uk. There are five categories – Cartoons/Manga, Writing, Photography, Reel/Film making and Arts. The closing date for this competition is Tuesday, 24th February 2026. Entries can be forwarded to the event organisers or in a special "You-Create" post box located in school. We hope children will be inspired to enter into one of the categories.

PTA News and Thank You

As we approach the end of term, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported our PTA events this Christmas. Whether you helped organise the Christmas Fair, attended and enjoyed the festivities, or contributed to the Christmas Gifts event, your generosity and involvement have made a real difference.

These activities provide valuable fundraising that directly benefits our pupils. I have been informed that the PTA will have a total raised at the Christmas Fayre in the New Year once all the money has been counted.

The children are already excited about plans for new resources, including a friendship bench, a music box for the KS1 playground, and additional playtime toys and activities for our tough spots.

We also want to share some important changes to the PTA committee from January 2026. After almost five years as Chair and Trustee, Mrs Macdonald will be stepping into the role of Vice Chair. The new committee will be:

Amelia Marles – Chair & Infants Uniform (Trustee)

Katie Tobin-Hill – Co-Chair (Trustee)

Emma Longmore – Treasurer (Trustee)

Natalie Macdonald – Vice Chair & Admin

Hannah Ruggins – Vice Chair – Junior Uniform

Sarah Spencer – Sports Spectacular Coordinator

A sincere thank you to Mrs Macdonald, who is standing down after giving so much time and energy to the PTA. Your commitment has been invaluable, and we are deeply grateful for all you have done.

Finally, thank you to all parents for your continued support of the PTA and our school community—it truly makes a difference.

Christmas Holidays

School closes for the Christmas holidays on Friday 19th December at the usual time, and reopens on Monday 5th January.

On behalf of all the Staff and Governors, I wish you all the joys of the festive season, and good health and happiness in 2026.

Happy Christmas everyone.

Kind regards.

E H Britten
Headteacher