



Autumn Term Newsletter 2

Friday 2nd October 2026



St Mary's C of E Primary School

Growing our community together

'Welcome, Nurture, Grow, Flourish'

Dear St Mary's Community,

It has been an absolute pleasure visiting classrooms over the past two weeks to see such exciting learning happening across all year groups. Our children are working incredibly hard and showing great enthusiasm for their studies every day. We continue to monitor attendance closely as everyday counts and would ask that our families support us in this by avoiding any absence that is not absolutely necessary.

Our Year 6 pupils had a fantastic visit to Hindleap Warren where they took part in lots of exciting outdoor activities. I really enjoyed visiting them for the evening and have loved hearing their stories. Thank you to Mrs Rose, Coach Ellis and Mrs Fouracre for accompanying them for the week.

I was really pleased to meet with our new PTA who are already planning some fantastic events to support our school community. We are focusing on fundraising for 'enrichment activities' for our children this year - trips, visitors and workshops to enrich the curriculum. We are looking forward to welcoming parents to our upcoming Parent Forum next week, which will be a brilliant opportunity to share ideas together.

I am delighted to say that we have been awarded free tickets for our year 5 and Year 6 pupils to visit the Rose Theatre in November to watch the Wind in the Willow. We are so lucky to have this opportunity.

I am also pleased to share that the latest Ofsted Report for St Paul's has now been officially published. You can read the full report by following this link: [St Paul's Ofsted Report](#).

It has been wonderful to get to meet more of you in the last few weeks. Thank you for your continued support, partnership and dedication to making our school a vibrant place to learn.

Mrs Emily Evans (Headteacher)

Attendance update

Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
92.9%	91.4%	90.7%	97.5%	92.3%	97.8%	95.1%

Whole school attendance	94.0%
National Average	96.3%

Parents' and Carers' Survey June 2026

The Interim Executive Board (IEB) received 10 responses to the parents survey, from parents with children in Rec to Y6. We were disappointed by this low number of responses. This makes it hard to confirm trends in what parents and carers feel school leaders and the wider team are doing well, and what should be improved further. Therefore we will repeat a survey in the spring term, at a school event, when we hope more parents will respond.

Many thanks to those parents who did respond to the survey. Many of you reported that your child(ren) told you about our collective worship (or assemblies). The majority of respondents said their child(ren) feel safe and that they have not been bullied. Things that you noted are working well included

- Good, trusting relationships with your child's teacher and support staff
- The 'family' feel of the school, 'everyone knows everyone'
- Outdoor learning environment, playground and resources

A clear strand about improving communication with parents and carers will be a priority for the IEB this term. Mrs Evans will be drafting a communications strategy and it would be helpful if we could have a couple of parent volunteers to review this plan with her. Please email the school office if you are able to join a small working group. We are particularly keen that you know what your child(ren) will be learning each half term and so the Curriculum section on the school website will be updated by Christmas.

Collective Worship Round Up

This week we have explored five Bible passages which help children and adults to understand and reflect on the British Values of Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Respect and Tolerance. Through these acts of collective worship, children and adults have been encouraged to recognise that every voice matters, make wise and responsible choices, understand the importance of doing what is right, value and respect difference, and use their freedom responsibly. Together, we have explored how these values can be lived out in our daily lives and contribute to a fair and respectful community where everyone is valued and able to flourish.



Wellbeing Curriculum

This term we are using the story of The Invisible String as the focus for our whole school wellbeing curriculum. The story is about a mother explaining to her children that they're all



connected by an invisible string. "What kind of string?" The answer is the simple truth that binds us all: An Invisible String made of love. Even though you can't see it with your eyes, you can feel it deep in your heart, and know that you are always connected to the ones you love. The book links to our whole school value of 'love' and is perfect for this time of year as children settle into new classes and may be finding it hard to separate from parents and carers at drop off time. You can watch and listen to the story [here](#), and talk with your child about who their invisible strings attach to.

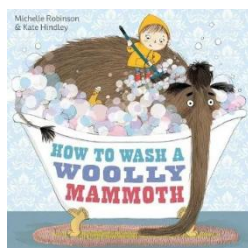
Scholastic Book Fair 5th - 9th October



We will be hosting a scholastic books fair in school next week. The fair will be open from 3.20pm each afternoon in the school library (please use the entrance from the KS2 playground) Every book purchased helps us to earn free books for our school, so your support is very much appreciated. Payments can be made online or in cash.

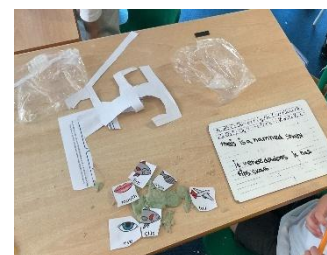
Teaching and Learning News

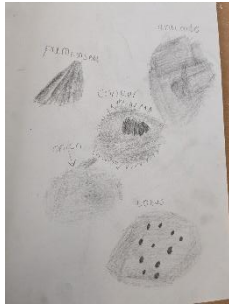
In **Butterfly class**, we have been getting very creative. Children created self portraits using paper plates, paint and wool for their hair. We also created some autumnal artwork. Children chose their favourite template, then dipped their forks into paint then printed it where they added spines to the hedgehog, leaves to the tree, feathers to the owl or flames on to the bonfire.



In **Squirrel Class**, the children have been completing some writing based on the story 'How to Wash a Woolly Mammoth'. Over the next couple of weeks they will be coming up with their own ways to wash a mammoth so get those thinking caps on! In Geography, we have been looking at aerial photographs of the local area and seeing what features we can spot on them.

In **Hedgehog Class**, we have been exploring the different needs of animals this half term, and how they meet them to survive. Recently, we got a little bit arty in Science by building fish out of playdough (thank you Mrs King for making the whole class playdough!) before labelling the different parts and identifying how those parts help them survive.





In **Fox Class**, we have been learning how to sketch and shade using organic objects as our artistic mediums. Step by step we are improving our skills!



This week in **Otter Class**, we have been learning about why the rainforest is important to us and the threats that are currently facing it. We have decided to write a class letter to the President of Brazil to persuade them to stop allowing deforestation in their country.

This week in **Owl Class** we began making our parachutes in science, these are for our topic of 'air resistance', next week we're going to experiment with our final products! The children really enjoyed this lesson and are very excited to carry out the practical.



In **Falcon Class** this week, we have been getting back into the swing of school after our exciting week at Hindleap Warren. The children have been working on addition and subtraction in maths and are making great progress in English with their writing of a travel guide to Narnia.



Richmond Dyslexia Association

Do you want to learn more about how you can support your dyslexic child?

We are hosting a series of events this autumn with experts in the field of dyslexia

	2nd November 19.15-20.45	Dyslexia and Maths Eryn Caddick
	16th November 19.15-20.45	Navigating Secondary School Katrina Cochran
	30th November 19.15-20.45	Working Memory Paloma Forde

Book now through www.richmond-dyslexia.org.uk

VENUE
Richmond Library Annexe
Quadrant Road
TW9 1TP

www.richmond-dyslexia.org.uk

£9 per talk

The Richmond Dyslexia Association is hosting a series of talks for parents and teachers of school aged children with dyslexia this November. Tickets are £9 each, booking is required. Please scan the QR code to book or go online at richmond-dyslexia.org.uk to secure your place.

Online Safety

This guide offers clear, supportive guidance to help parents and educators feel more confident in navigating the online world with children and young people. It looks at how everyday conversations, simple boundaries, and a bit of digital awareness can make a real difference to young people's online experiences. It also explores how parents and educators can create an environment where children feel comfortable asking for help when something online unsettles them.

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.

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

ESSENTIAL ONLINE SAFETY

Children and young people use the internet every day to learn, play, and connect, but the online world is not always safe. For adults, it can be hard to keep up with the risks, including harmful content, cyberbullying and scams. These 10 tips provide clear and practical advice to support safer and healthier digital habits, helping young people to make informed, secure choices when using technology.

- 1 START EARLY CONVERSATIONS**
Begin talking about online behaviour from the moment children start using devices. Use age-appropriate language and revisit topics regularly, making it clear they can speak to you about anything that upsets or confuses them. Keeping these chats open helps build trust, so children are more likely to come to you when needed.
- 2 PROMOTE SAFER SHARING**
Children can overshare without understanding the risks. Remind them that photos, locations, or messages can be copied or shared beyond their intended audience. Explain how even private messages or group chats can be saved and/or misused. Talk about what is appropriate to post, message, and who it's safe to share with.
- 3 ENCOURAGE DIGITAL BALANCE**
Many apps and games are designed to keep users engaged through rewards, likes, or constant updates. These features can make it hard for children to switch off. Talk openly about how these systems work and help children recognise when it's time to take a break. Building in tech-free routines supports a healthier balance and awareness of their screen time.
- 4 CREATE A SAFE SPACE FOR CONCERNS**
When children come to you with a concern, respond with interest and care, rather than with alarm. Keeping your reaction measured helps them feel safe and supported. This doesn't mean ignoring serious issues; it means showing that you're there to help. When children trust that they can speak openly, they're more likely to feel supported through unpleasant online experiences, and to ask for help in future.
- 5 STAY INFORMED AND CURRENT**
With emerging technologies like AI moving and changing so quickly, it's important to stay updated on how children are using new platforms, apps and games. Ask them to show you what they use and let them take the lead as you explore together. This opens up valuable conversations and helps you stay ahead of emerging risks and trends.
- 6 TEACH CRITICAL THINKING**
Talk to children about how to recognise unreliable information or scams online. With AI-generated videos, photos, and stories becoming harder to spot, help children question what they see and encourage them to look for evidence, check sources, and ask questions. These skills will help them avoid risks, make smart choices, and develop healthy habits for the future.
- 7 SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES**
Involve children in conversations about device usage so they feel included. Agree on digital rules such as screen-time limits, age-appropriate apps, and no devices in bedrooms overnight. Use parental controls to block or filter harmful content and explain that rules are there to protect and support them, not to spoil their fun.
- 8 LEAD BY EXAMPLE**
Children often copy the behaviour of adults around them. Show them what balanced, respectful, and mindful use of technology looks like, such as avoiding scrolling during family time and speaking kindly in messages. If you expect certain behaviour from them online, make sure your own habits reflect the same standards.
- 9 EXPLORE PRIVACY SETTINGS TOGETHER**
Show children how to use privacy tools on apps, games, and websites. Teach them to use strong passwords, block or report others in response to problems, and avoid sharing personal details. Explore settings together so they feel confident and in control, and explain that these features are there to help them stay safe online.
- 10 KNOW WHERE TO GET HELP**
Familiarise yourself with tools and organisations that support online safety. The National College offers online safety guides and webinars which provide tips on staying safe. Websites like Report Harmful Content and CEOP can be used to report when something goes wrong. Show children how to report or block users, and where to go if they feel unsafe. Make sure they know that asking for help is always the right thing to do, and be prepared to support them.

Meet Our Expert
Home to the world's largest CPD library for educators, The National College has transformed the way education establishments go about developing their workforces and managing compliance. Our three memberships help all phases and types of setting raise standards, save time, reduce risk, and build a culture of improvement.

See full reference list on [our website](https://nationalcollege.com)

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Dojo Points

The children earn dojo points for their class and their house team by showing positive behaviours at school such as persistence, helping others, teamwork, courage or respect. In Celebration Worship each week we share the current leader board with the children. The team who has earned the most dojo points at the end of this half term will be invited to have a non-uniform day on Friday 23rd October. Our current leaders are...



Diary Dates

5th - 9th October	Scholastic Book Fair in school
5th October	School Photographer taking individual pupil photographs
6th October	Parent Forum Meeting
14th October	Y5 visit to National Portrait Gallery
26th-30th October	Half Term Break - school is closed