



Autumn Term Newsletter 1

Friday 18th September 2026



St Mary's C of E Primary School

Growing our community together

'Welcome, Nurture, Grow, Flourish'

Welcome back to a new term at our school; it has been a truly wonderful start and all of our classes are settling exceptionally well into their daily routines. In our daily worship, the children have shared some lovely, thoughtful reflections, demonstrating a real maturity and respect for one another when considering how we can 'notice' who needs our help and how we could help them. Behind the scenes, our dedicated teachers are busy planning a wide range of exciting enrichment activities to enhance our curriculum over the coming months. We hope that parents and carers will appreciate the additional detail on our new 'Learning Maps' to give you further information about your child's learning for this half-term.

We would like to extend a warm thank you to all parents and carers who attended our recent 'Meet the Teacher' sessions, as working together is key to your child's success. Looking ahead, we are eager to host our very first Parent Forum, though please do note the slight change of date on the school calendar for the first meeting which will now be hosted on **Tuesday 6th October at 10am**. For this meeting, we are inviting two parent or carer representatives from each class to join us to discuss what is working well and to identify areas where families might need further support. Please let the office know if you will be coming to the meeting and we will send out a bit more information in the week before.

Finally, we must send a special mention to our brand-new Reception class, who have made a remarkably positive start to their school journey. Thank you all for your continued support as we look forward to a successful term ahead.

Mrs Evans

Attendance update

Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
89.2%	92.7%	89.6%	96.1%	89.5%	96.3%	94.1%

Whole school attendance	92.9%
National Average	96.5%

Collective Worship Round Up

Theme for the week: Our Vision and Values

We have explored four Bible passages which help us to understand and live out our school's Christian vision and values: Love, Community and Courage. Through our daily worship children and adults have been encouraged to consider how we can grow and flourish together, show love and compassion, build a welcoming community, and have courage to face challenges and stand up for what is right.



The small things that I do today can make a big difference

Community means coming together like a family

When we are friendly it makes people feel like they belong

Even if my work feels difficult, if I try a small bit it can help me be better

Teaching and Learning News



On Friday 4th September, our Early Years team attended Achieving for Children's annual Early Years conference at Kingston University. The team returned to school filled with inspiration for the year ahead having had the opportunity to meet with Early Years professionals from across the borough and attend a variety of workshops and talks. The highlight of the day was meeting the author Michael Rosen and Mrs King was able to get some signed copies of two of his books which she has shared with the children this week.



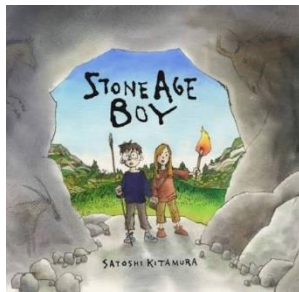
Butterfly Class had a great first week. The children have settled in really well and have enjoyed getting to know their new teachers and classmates. We have been busy exploring our classroom, learning our new routines and making lots of new friends.



Squirrel Class have been reading the story of The Colour Monster by Anna Llenas and learning about different emotions. They have also been very welcoming to our new pupils in Butterfly Class, smiling, saying hello and inviting them to play with them at lunchtime. Great job Squirrel Class!



In **Hedgehog Class**, we have had a fast start to the year in English, as we start our new book "The Robot and the Bluebird" by David Lucas. The children have re-ordered the main events of *The Robot and the Bluebird* into chronological order, practised using time conjunctions (*First, Next, Then, Later, At last*) to connect story events smoothly and orally rehearsed recounting the story to a partner from the Robot's point of view.



Fox Class have begun the year looking at the book *Stone Age Boy* by Satoshi Kitamura. They have been introduced to the story by using their senses to describe the setting for *Stone Age Boy*.

The children in **Otter Class** have had an incredible start to year 4 showing enthusiasm for their learning across all subjects. We have started our English unit where we are writing a setting description imagining we are sailing down the Nile and next week we start our weekly trumpet lessons!



Owl Class have had a really good start to Year 5, they have shown focussed learning, concentration and enthusiasm in all subjects! In science this week we have been learning about air resistance, the children experimented and made their own paper aeroplanes, testing which travelled the furthest.



In **Falcon Class** the children have all settled in wonderfully and are beginning to work together really well. I have been very impressed with how well they have listened and are rising to the challenge of being Year 6 pupils!

Online Safety

For many children and young people, change can be hard to process – and this is no different when the time comes for them to return to school. After such a long stretch of time away, they may begin to feel creeping doubts over their lessons, their teachers, their routines, or even any friends they haven't seen over the summer.

Parents, educators, and other trusted adults play a vital role for these children. This guide offers expert advice on how to lend a hand to youngsters returning to education, and details what you can do to make this transition as easy as possible.

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 SUPPORTING CHILDREN GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

Change can be hard for children to manage. Going back to school after a long summer break might cause them to feel uncertain about their friendships, school routines and relationships with new teachers. However, trusted adults play an important role in providing both practical and emotional support.

1 LEARN WHAT EQUIPMENT YOU NEED

Figure out a list of all equipment needed for the start of the school year, so you can comfortably get your hands on the necessary items in time. If children have any financial issues and receive free school meals, the school may be able to provide some monetary aid or offer other support.

2 COMMUNICATE WITH THE SCHOOL

If you notice that a child is feeling anxious about a change of teacher or school, arranging a one-to-one meeting with their new teacher can be a good way to alleviate some of the anxiety. Just knowing that they understand the child's worries and will be able to help them if the need arises can build the foundations of a good working relationship. Knowing that you can contact them with any queries can also be reassuring.

3 CHECK THE SCHOOL WEBSITE

There will be plenty of information about the start of term on the school's website to keep you updated. Furthermore, you should be able to find other useful information such as contact details for staff, important school equipment, clubs, and news about any special events on the school calendar for the year. It could be helpful to look through this with children for anything which might reassure them.

4 HELP TO MANAGE FRIENDSHIPS

If a child is feeling anxious about making new friends – especially if they're moving up to secondary school – it can be a good idea to remind them of what they could do or say when meeting new classmates. Investigating the extracurricular activities available could be a good way to open a conversation about their hobbies and pastimes, and joining such clubs could allow new friendships to be built on this mutual interest.

5 PLAN SELF-CARE

Talking to children about how they can manage their self-care can be an effective way of helping them understand its importance. This might involve playing a computer game they love with friends, a weekly visit to the library, getting to bed at the same time each night, or a range of other activities that support their wellbeing and provide the familiarity and safety of a routine that works for them.

6 MANAGE TRICKY FEELINGS

Explain that it's okay to have difficult feelings around returning to school. This can help reduce any shame or embarrassment a child might be feeling over these emotions. Emphasise that other children – even some of the teachers – will be feeling the same way. Consider practical ways to manage these feelings and help children feel more in control of their emotions. Some examples include fidget toys, breathing exercises or a notepad for doodling.

7 SECURE A SCHOOL UNIFORM

Parents and carers should try to buy a child's uniform for the new academic year well in advance of the new term (although allowing for potential holiday growth spurts) and give them time to adapt to any changes. Make sure they can comfortably change into and out of it for PE lessons. Double check the requirements for PE on the school's website, as some schools will also have requirements for PE kits.

8 PREPARE FOR TRANSITION DAYS

Ensuring that children attend transition days is a vital step in preparing for the new year. Some schools also have transition evenings for parents and carers to attend, offering extra opportunities to reach out for any additional support.

9 READ THE MENTAL HEALTH POLICY

If a young person struggles with their mental health, it's important to understand their school's mental health policy and provision to know what support is available. This should be on the school's website. A range of aid is typically on offer – from individual timetable amendments to group sessions on emotional wellbeing. You can then discuss these options with the child to reassure them that help is there if they need it.

10 LEARN ABOUT SEN SUPPORT

If a child has SEN and receives help in school, try to confirm exactly what support is available, to ensure they're having their needs met. If they're moving up to secondary school, it's a good idea to meet with the SENCO to ensure that all teachers receive the most relevant, up-to-date information about the child's needs and have a contact to liaise with if these change over time.

Meet Our Expert

Amy Sayer is a freelance mental health trainer for schools, an author and a content writer. She is an Associate for Diverse Educates, a fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching and an ITT wellbeing coach. Amy has previously been a SMH coach, helping many different settings audit their mental health provision and support them to create and implement a strategic plan based on the specific needs of each setting.



#WakeUpWednesday

The National College

Source: See full reference list on guide page at: <https://nationalcollege.com/guides/supporting-children-going-back-to-school>

@wake_up_weds

/www.thenationalcollege

@wake.up.wednesday

@wake.up.weds

Users of this guide do so at their own discretion. No liability is entered into. Current as of the date of release: 04.09.2024

Diary Dates

21st-25th September	Year 6 Residential Trip to Hindleap Warren
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

Further dates will be added as the term progresses.