

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CE JUNIOR SCHOOL

"Realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community"



NEWSLETTER

27th May 2022



Yesterday was **Ascension Day** - for 40 days after his resurrection on Easter Sunday, the Bible says that Jesus travelled and preached with his apostles, preparing them for his departure from Earth. Ascension Day marks the moment Jesus literally ascended into heaven before his disciples, at the village of Bethany, near Jerusalem. The Book of Acts provides the longest account of Christ's farewell to his disciples, bidding them to preach the word of God and assuring them of his eventual return for the Second Coming.

"After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight," the book says. *"They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. 'Men of Galilee,' they said, 'why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven'."*

As we prepare to break up for the half term break next week I know many of us are tired after a busy half term since our return after Easter. I do hope that you are all able to find some time next week to relax and enjoy what looks like some promising weather. Many of you will also be taking advantage of the extra Bank Holiday to mark and celebrate HM The Queen and her Platinum Jubilee. There are many events being organised locally and further afield and some of you may even be involved in holding a street party! As we draw closer to this momentous occasion the bunting is appearing, flags being flown and red, white and blue popping up in our environment.

As the extra Bank Holiday falls in the school half term break we have been permitted to identify an 'extra' school holiday date which we are taking on **Monday 6th June 2022** – the school will be closed on this day (this has been previously communicated to you). Therefore, we return to school for the beginning of the second half of the summer term on Tuesday 7th June 2022 – don't be late!

Further on in this newsletter is detail about how our school will be holding a Platinum Jubilee Junior School Picnic!

Thank you for your continued support, patience and prayers.

Library News!

Mrs Emery (School Librarian) is delighted to report that we have awarded **230** reading awards (including three platinum certificates) since the beginning of January! This is fantastic news. Library drop-in sessions at lunchtimes remain as busy as ever.

We have been gifted the complete set of 'The Dork Diaries' (written by Rachel Renee Russell) by Isabelle, a former pupil who became a Librarian in Year 6, who left St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School in 2020. She hopes that the children enjoy reading these as much as she did!

In the second half of the summer term, we will be introducing two new initiatives: 'Pull Up a Bean Bag' – which will give younger children the opportunity to listen to a short story (or part of a longer story), read by a child in the Upper School (at lunchtimes) and 'Outside Reading Corner' – on a quiet corner of the school field, at lunchtimes when the library isn't open. Books will be brought outside from the library for the children to enjoy.

If your child has still to achieve their Bronze Award on the St Thomas' Reading Tree Challenge please encourage and support them as we continue to promote the Essex Year of Reading.



Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School Year 7 Admissions September - 2023

Brentwood Ursuline Convent High School will be offering Music Scholarships and Music Places to 17 students of its September 2023 Year 7 intake based on musical aptitude. Music Scholarships and Music Places are aimed at supporting talented musicians who will benefit from and enrich the musical life of the school.

Applicants for Music Scholarships and Music Places need not be from the priority areas or be Catholic, but would be expected to respect the Catholic ethos of the school and take an active part in its musical and liturgical life. Any prospective Year 7 student for September 2023 entry is eligible to apply, and applicants will be invited to take part in the musical aptitude assessment process starting on Wednesday 14th September 2022.

Parents wishing to apply should submit the appropriate form (available to download from the website www.brentwoodursuline.co.uk) Completed forms must be sent to BUCHS by **Tuesday 19th July 2022**. *Please note that this deadline only applies to Music Scholarship & Places applicants.*

Platinum Jubilee Junior School Picnic



On 6th February this year Her Majesty The Queen became the first British Monarch to celebrate a Platinum Jubilee, marking 70 years of service to the people of the United Kingdom, the Realms and the Commonwealth. To celebrate this unprecedented anniversary, St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School will be holding a Platinum Jubilee School Picnic on **Friday 10th June 2022**.

To get us in the celebratory mood on this day we are asking the children to leave their school uniform at home and wear as much red, white and blue as they can! You may even want to bring in your Union flag. At lunchtime the whole school community (children & staff) will be setting themselves up on the school field in their classes to enjoy a picnic and to play some games with each other. All children on this day will need to bring in a suitable packed lunch to eat on the field. If your child is in receipt of free school meals and you are unable to supply a packed lunch then please contact the School Office and speak to Mrs Lawrence who will be able to organise a packed lunch provided through the school kitchen.

The school catering staff have also agreed to make some special Jubilee cakes for the occasion so your child will also be given one of these on the day. In addition, to mark the event all children and staff will be given a special commemorative Platinum Jubilee Bookmark to tuck in to their favourite book as we continue to support the Essex Year of Reading. These bookmarks have been very generously paid for by the PTA – thank you!

In preparation you may like to explore the Queen's Jubilee website, created by DK Books. You will find free audio recordings of 'Queen Elizabeth: a Platinum Jubilee Celebration'; a commemorative book written in collaboration with royal experts and historians. There are also links to other Jubilee resources and videos. Please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/38k8xd6e>

Staffing Update

Following a recruitment and interview process last week I am delighted to be able to share with you the news that we have appointed a new classteacher for September 2022 to cover Mrs Antrobus' maternity leave.

From the beginning of the new academic year we will be welcoming **Miss Aisling Smyth** to our teaching team. Many of you may be familiar with the name as Miss Smyth has previously worked at St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School as a Teaching Assistant and has also completed one of her teacher training placements in Year 4. Miss Smyth is now a qualified classteacher and we are very excited to be welcoming her back in her new capacity. I am sure you will make her feel very welcome!

NFER Data Sharing Protocol

As we are committed to being transparent with parents and carers with regards to use of your children's data, we are writing to inform you about an update regarding a specific use of assessment data.

At our school we use standardised assessments to help us understand your children's attainment, progress and learning needs. These assessments are provided by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) who are a trusted charitable foundation of more than 75 years standing.

NFER carry out a wide range of independent research to generate valuable insights and to support positive change across education systems. I am writing to inform you that your child's assessment data is being shared with NFER to enable them to more easily generate research insights that can be used to improve outcomes for current and future generations.

The data from these non-statutory assessments is valuable for research-purposes because it provides a record of pupils' attainment and progress, including prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic. This information can contribute significantly to the research NFER carries out to support teaching and learning at this difficult time and in the future. As a school, we are happy to be able to positively contribute to research in this way.

No schools or individuals will be named or identifiable in any reports or other outputs generated from this research and NFER are committed to the highest levels of data security and care. No additional assessment tasks are being requested as part of this data collection; we will only be sharing assessment data for tests we set as part of our regular assessment programme at our school.

For further information about how the data will be used and for full details of your rights with respect to this data, including how to opt out, please see: www.nfer.ac.uk/nfer-tests-privacy-notice.

Finally....

Today has certainly been a day to remember as we experienced our second PTA Break the Rules Day. What a sight to behold this morning as children arrived with some very interesting hair styles and colours. Thank you to everyone who supported this event and helped raise money for our school. I do hope that over the half term holiday children's normal hair colour returns!!

Congratulations to Louie Newnham (Year 6) who has been awarded the prestigious position of Head Boy Chorister at St Thomas of Canterbury Church.

Have a super half term week, stay safe and I look forward to seeing you all again on **Tuesday 7th June 2022**.



Mr D. Moran
Headteacher

And... please remember if you have any questions or queries or comments feel free to contact us: admin@stthomasjnr.essex.sch.uk