

Witchampton First School NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2025

Message from Mrs Fairman

What a wonderful start to the term we have had! It has been an absolute pleasure to see the children settle so well into their new classes, forming new friendships and getting to know some of our new staff too. We have truly hit the ground running with fantastic learning taking place across the school, alongside a wide range of enrichment activities and special visitors.

We begin by extending a very warm welcome to all our new families who have joined us this September — we are delighted to have you as part of our school community. Alongside our new families, we are fortunate to welcome several new members of staff who bring a wealth of experience and expertise to our team:

- Mrs Tarchetti, a qualified teacher who works across the school, teaching classes during teachers' PPA time.
- Miss Self, our Teaching and Learning Lead for the Trust, who supports teaching and learning across the school to raise standards. She is a highly experienced teacher with expertise across the year groups.
- Mrs Jones, our new SENDCo, who works across Trust schools and brings extensive experience of supporting children with a wide range of learning needs in both large and small settings.
- Mrs Hurlstone, our specialist PE teacher, who has delivered fantastic gymnastics sessions this half term and inspired children to be active, confident, and resilient.
- Mrs Tudor-Murphy is now running our breakfast club. I can not express to you how lucky we are to have her creative ideas and kindness as part of our team.
- We have recently appointed two new TA's who will join us after half term, Oliva Snape and Marie Tudor Murphy. They will work across all classes.

With such a strong and experienced teaching team, we are in a fantastic position to continue building on our successes and providing the very best for our children.

This half term, our Christian value of focus has been Generosity. We have been exploring what it means to show generosity to ourselves, to others, and beyond our school community. Across classes, children have demonstrated this value through acts of kindness, collaboration in learning, and thoughtful support for one another. It has been wonderful to see this value come to life in so many ways

Finally, I would like to personally thank everyone for the warm welcome I have received this term. It has been wonderful to see the enthusiasm and positivity across the school, and I very much look forward to the year ahead and all that we will achieve together.

Curriculum updates

We began the term with a truly memorable experience — a visit from Steele the Gladiator during our first full week back. His incredible handstands captured the attention of the whole school community, but even more powerful was his important message about self-esteem and healthy living, which really resonated with the children. Our new Reception pupils must have been wondering what school was all about when their very first visitor was a gladiator — but we like to set the bar high!



Maths: This term, our learners have been superstars in Maths! In Foxes class, they have been working on their place value with Year 3 focusing on numbers to 1,000 and Year 4 focusing on numbers to 10,000. They have been practising their times tables to increase their fluency and accuracy. Please encourage the children to practice their times tables regularly at home! In Badgers class, they have been learning about place value within 20 and really practising their number bonds!

English: This term, our pupils have been engaging in a wonderful array of book activities! The EYFS children have joyously begun their journey of learning first sounds through our "Unlocking Letters and Sounds" scheme, and they are now reading simple sentences—what an achievement! Badgers Class has had a fantastic time with "The Day the Crayons Quit," where they creatively wrote letters as complaining crayons! Additionally, we've explored "Proudest Blue," delving into the theme of differences while crafting sentences rich with adjectives. Over in Foxes, students are developing their writing skills through character and setting descriptions, as well as instructions for washing a Stone Age animal, before embarking on a non-chronological report about these fascinating creatures. What an exciting time for English!

EYFS

Our Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) learners have been diving into a world of exploration and discovery. Through play-based learning, they are developing crucial skills in communication, physical development, and personal, social, and emotional growth. This term, the children have been fascinated by the changing seasons, and we've incorporated this theme into our activities. From crafting autumn leaves to storytelling sessions about woodland animals, the classroom buzzes with creativity and curiosity. The children are also enjoying their time in the outdoor play area, where they can explore nature and engage in imaginative play. Our goal is to nurture their natural enthusiasm for learning and help them to build a strong foundation for their future education journey.

Physical Education

This month, Mrs Hurlstone took a group of Year 4 Sports Leaders to an event where they learned how to lead small physical activity sessions during lunch and playtimes. The children have already started putting their learning into action, and Mrs Hurlstone was proud to say they represented our school exceptionally well.

School Values

In September, our staff team came together to revisit and refresh our school values. After a period of change, it felt the perfect time to reset our focus and ensure our mission truly reflects who we are as a school. Together, we defined a clear and inspiring vision, rooted in our Christian foundation and shared across our whole community.

Children have also played an important role in this process — sharing their thoughts in class and during Worship time. Their ideas helped us to refine our school values and reconnect with the heart of our theological vision:

Small school, Loving hearts, Rooted in the community

**“Live a life of love, just as Jesus loved us.”
(Ephesians 5:2)**

Our refreshed core values — Love, Courage, and Inspiration — shape everything we do.

- Love guides us to show kindness, care and respect for ourselves and others.
- Courage gives us the strength to take risks, face challenges and grow.
- Inspiration drives us to be curious, creative and ambitious in all areas of life and learning.

We're working hard to make sure these values are alive in every classroom, every lesson, and every experience. Opportunities for spiritual growth and reflection are being woven through the curriculum — from moments of awe and wonder in learning to collective worship that deepens our understanding of faith and community. Our aim is simple: to nurture children who are loving in heart, courageous in spirit, and inspired to make a difference. Together, as a small school with a big heart, we are proud to live out our vision every single day.

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School council

Rosie and Hannah represented our school brilliantly at the recent School Council meeting held in the Wimborne Town Council Chamber with Cllr Jeff Clarke. They shared thoughtful ideas about how schools and young people can play an active role in the upcoming Wimborne Town of Culture celebrations. Both girls spoke with confidence, enthusiasm, and inspiration, showcasing the very best of our school. Well done, Rosie and Hannah — we are so proud of you!

Harvest Festival

We had a lovely Harvest Festival in the church this year. The children shared songs, readings, and reflections, celebrating the season and the blessings in our lives.

We are very grateful to all the parents and families for their generosity. Your donations of food and gifts will be a real help to those in need and are greatly appreciated.

Thank you for helping to make this a special and meaningful celebration for our school community.

PTA

We are lucky to have a dedicated team of parents running our PTA and have really enjoyed their fundraising events this half term. Thank you to the parents who also made cakes and supported the new parent open mornings. We have had a lot of positive feedback with some 1st choices even at this early stage.

If you would like to get involved or have fundraising ideas, please contact the office. Keep an eye on the weekly briefings for upcoming events!

Attendance at school is extremely important. National research clearly shows that time lost from school can lead to lower achievement levels. Please can I remind you to schedule medical appointments outside of school hours whenever possible, and that holidays during term time cannot be authorised.

This term, whole-school attendance stands at 95.3%, compared to the national average of 95.5%. Please continue to support us in maintaining high attendance as we approach the winter months.

We understand that at this time of year, children may be unwell due to colds and other seasonal illnesses. Of course, we fully support children taking the time they need to recover properly, and their wellbeing always comes first.

By working together, we can ensure that children benefit fully from their learning and remain on track for success.

Number of days lost each year (the full school year for Initio has 187 days or 37.4 weeks)	Overall attendance level	Impact on child's education
5 days (1 full week) or less	97%+	These children have every chance to make really strong progress at school.
10 days (2 full weeks of absence)	95%	These children benefit from strong overall attendance and are well placed to make good progress at school. We aim for every child to have at least 96% attendance overall.
19 days (similar to 1 month of absence)	90%	Children in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best
29 days (similar to a whole half term of absence)	85%	Children in this group are missing six weeks of school per year; there is a real risk that this lower attendance will hinder children's progress. Absence below 90% is considered to be persistent absenteeism.
38 days (similar to 8 weeks of absence)	80%	Children in this group are missing a year of school over five years of education. They are not benefitting from their right to be educated. Parents / carers of young people in this group could be issued with a penalty notice.

School Improvement plan and SIAMS

This year, our School Improvement Plan has a clear focus on leadership, as we navigate a period of change and introduce new leadership responsibilities. With this focus, we aim to drive academic achievement and secure future opportunities for all our children.

Other key priorities include enhancing support for vulnerable learners, which is already making a positive impact with our new SENDCo in place permanently, and ensuring our Church School flourishes, strengthening our Christian ethos and links with the local church.

Our newly formed Local Schools Community is supporting us to ensure that all targets are met and embedded as we progress through the year.

Teaching and learning remains a constant priority. This year, our team is focusing on the WALKTHRU materials to develop classroom practice and improve outcomes for all pupils. A key part of this is checking for understanding in every lesson — ensuring that teachers regularly assess whether pupils grasp new concepts, adapting teaching in real time to meet the needs of each child. By combining high-quality teaching strategies with ongoing assessment and reflection, we aim to accelerate progress and ensure all pupils reach their potential.

With strong leadership, a dedicated staff, and a clear plan, we look forward to a year of meaningful growth, achievement, and lasting impact across the school.

OCTOBER 2025

Staff Shout Outs

It's hard to know where to begin when it comes to staff shout-outs — we are so fortunate to have such a dedicated, caring, and hard-working team. Every adult in school has given their all over the past seven weeks, and they truly deserve a well-earned half-term break!

A special mention goes to Mrs Cohen in the school office, who has been working tirelessly to introduce our new newsletter format and keep the day-to-day running of the school smooth and organised.

Another huge thank you to Mrs Jenkinson, who supports our school in a hundred quiet ways — from tending the flower pots to checking in on colleagues and spreading kindness wherever she goes. And finally, a shout-out to Mrs Hurlstone, who has taken to life at Witchampton like a fish in water — full of energy, enthusiasm, and expertise!

Of course, I could mention every member of staff each half term — their collective commitment and positivity make our school such a special place.

Safe-Guarding

The NSPCC have a wealth of information for parents and carers on how to support your child and keep them safe. [Click here](#) for more information.

Parents evenings

It was great to see so many people at the recent parents evening. It is always a pleasure to share the children's achievements with you.

A big thank you to Mr Fazey, who has made some fencing from leftover wood. It has completely transformed our outdoor space, making it more usable and enjoyable for the children.

We are also very grateful to Mrs Stone, Mrs Karen Peace, and Mrs Read, who organised and supported a Cheese and Wine evening, raising an incredible amount of money for the school. Your generosity and kindness are much appreciated.

A heartfelt thanks to the Open the Book team, who regularly lead our collective worship, and to Nick the Vicar, who also comes in to lead worship for the children.

We are also grateful to our team of volunteers — Mrs Susan Harvey, Mrs Audrey Hayter, Mrs Hayes and Fiona — who support our children with reading and book changing every week.

Thank you all for contributing to the wonderful Witchampton community — your time, energy, and generosity make such a difference to the life of our school.

A Snap Shot!



Create and donate

Bake treats: Bake cookies, muffins, or other treats to share with neighbours, family, or friends

Make artwork: Draw, paint, or create artwork to give as a gift to a loved one.

Make care packages: Assemble care packages for the homeless or those in need, which can include items like socks, snacks, or toiletries.

Create a bird feeder: Make a simple bird feeder for your yard to help local wildlife.

Donate household items

Go through your closets and donate clothes that no longer fit or are no longer worn.

Gather and donate toys:

Collect gently used toys you no longer play with and donate them to a local charity or shelter.

Donate food:

Collect non-perishable food items from your pantry to donate to a local food bank.

Practice small acts of kindness

Write notes:

Send a handwritten letter or a small note of appreciation to a friend, family member, or teacher.

Give compliments:

Tell family members what you appreciate about them, or give a compliment to a friend or neighbour.

Help with chores:

Offer to help with household chores or ask a parent how you can be helpful.

Make a "kindness jar":

Decorate a jar and fill it with slips of paper containing ideas for acts of kindness to perform.

Do "kindness bingo":

Create or find a "kindness bingo" card with different acts of kindness as the squares.

"Kindness scavenger hunt":

Create a scavenger hunt list with simple kindness activities for family members to complete.