

Witchampton First School Newsletter



Message from Mrs Fairman

A Wonderful Start to the Academic Year!

What an inspiring start to the autumn term we have had! It has been an absolute joy to see our school community bustling with energy, curiosity, and enthusiasm. We have had the absolute pleasure of welcoming several new families to our school family this term. On behalf of everyone here, I would like to take this opportunity to extend a very warm welcome to you all—we are so delighted that you have joined us!

Our new class routines are already fully established, and the children have settled in brilliantly. Walking around the classes, I am always so proud of the pride the children are taking in their learning. They have already produced some truly outstanding work in their books. In fact, our school was recently highlighted in a local headteachers' meeting as a prime example of neat presentation and high standards! It is a wonderful recognition of the hard work our pupils put in every single day. Village school education at its very best! Our termly learning topics are capturing the children's imaginations. While we were naturally disappointed to have to cancel a recent trip at short notice, it has certainly not dampened the learning adventure; the children have enjoyed a fantastic range of memorable experiences right across this half term.

Fridays have become an extra special highlight with Outdoor Explorers! We are delighted to have Mrs Tudor-Murphy with us each Friday; the children absolutely love seeing her and engaging with the creative learning ideas she brings to our outdoor spaces. Our Year 4 pupils have also been stepping up as brilliant role models. They recently travelled to Ferndown Middle School for specialised Play Leader training to learn how to lead games and support younger pupils at break times. Mrs Hurlstone was full of praise for them, complimenting the children on their exceptional behaviour, teamwork, and positive attitudes throughout the session.

Message from Mrs Fairman continued!

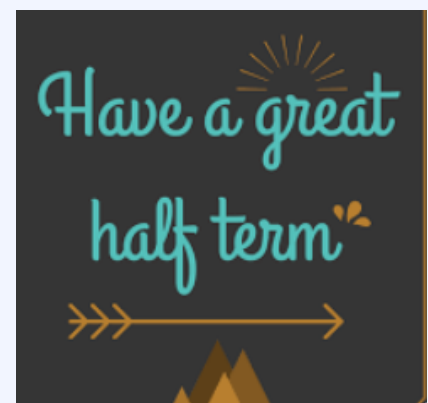
Our children continue to take an active role in making our school a better place for everyone. They were captivated by a special hedgehog rescue visit in school, which taught us all about local wildlife conservation and how to care for creatures in our environment. Alongside this, our Eco Group, School Council, and Worship Leads have been hard at work behind the scenes, meeting regularly and putting their ideas into action to improve our school environment and support our wider community.

Music has also been echoing through the corridors! Our school choir delivered a magnificent performance singing in the Minster, and we have recently completed our recording for 'Christmas at Our Place'. Beyond choir, it is always a genuine joy hearing pupils make such steady, confident progress with their individual instruments during weekly practice.

As part of our Church School Flourishing initiative, we have been revisiting our core values: Love, Courage, and Inspiration. We continuously encourage the children to make meaningful links between the Bible stories they hear during worship and their daily lives. We focus particularly on the story of the Loaves and Fishes, exploring how even the smallest acts of kindness can inspire others, and how young children frequently show quiet courage in ways they might not even realise. Highlighting these moments brings such an uplifting feeling to our entire school family, and our pupils are so good at demonstrating genuine love, empathy, and kindness to one another. Looking ahead, Mrs Jenkinson is leading an exciting new project to design and build a dedicated Spiritual Garden on site, a quiet space for reflection, prayer, and peace. We are immensely grateful to the Friends of Witchampton for their generous financial support in helping make this vision a reality.

As we look forward to the second half of the autumn term and head towards the festive season, we have a wonderful calendar of events planned. I will hold back from sharing too much just yet, but there is plenty of magic to look forward to! Thank you all for your continued support, warmth, and partnership.

Have a wonderful, restful, and safe half-term break!



Term starts on Tuesday 3rd November

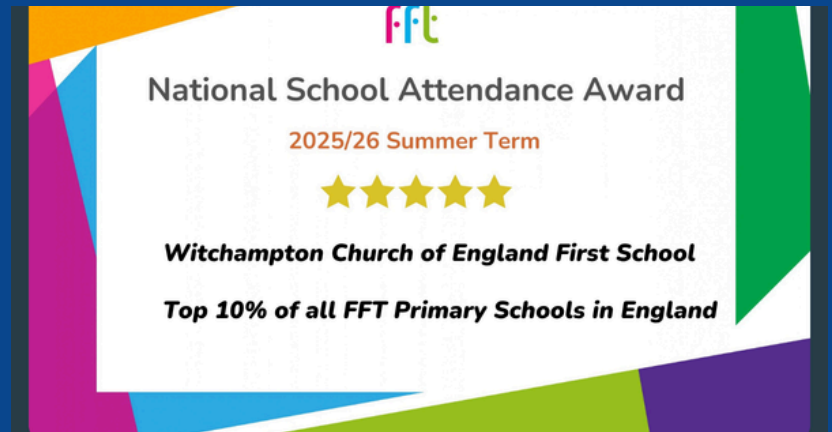
Attendance

We were proud to receive an attendance award from the FFT for our summer term attendance. Well done and thank you.

This school year, we are currently at 98% attendance, which is amazing. I do know we are heading toward germ season, but please do support us to keep attendance levels high by thinking twice about that winter break! The following Website may help decide if your child is well enough for school.

Is my child too ill for school?

DfE animation



Safeguarding

Benedict's Law was recently implemented across the UK. In response to this we are updating and strengthening our whole-school allergy protocols.

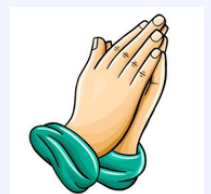
What this means for our school community:

- **Comprehensive Staff Training:** All teachers, support staff, and lunchtime supervisors undergo mandatory allergy awareness and emergency response training.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Up-to-date Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs) are maintained for every student with a known allergy, and spare emergency Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs) are stocked across the school site.
- **Safe & Inclusive Activities:** Risk assessments ensure food-based activities, crafts, breakfast/after-school clubs, and school trips are safe and inclusive for everyone.

Time for prayer

Lay preacher Robin, who is a huge support to both schools in his LSC role and as a local lay preacher, is starting a prayer group for each school in the churches. Please do join him if you can for a moment of prayer or quiet. You are very welcome if this is your first visit or you have been to a similar thing before. It is the first time we have done this as a school, so we are starting together. Witchampton First School will be welcoming Lay preacher Robin on

Witchampton Church, Monday 7th December 9am
Pamphill St Stephen's Church 5th November 9am



Christmas at our place

The children thoroughly enjoyed wearing their Christmas jumpers in October to record our part in the charity Christmas song 'Christmas at our place'. We are very grateful for the opportunity which was provided by Verwood Choir. The song will be released on 16th November. Please download it and encourage your family to do so too! All the proceeds from the song go to Amelia's rainbow.

Harvest Festival

Thank you to those who came to Harvest Festival and celebrated this time of year. We are always proud of the children but they did really well in Church this year, in particular our reception children who have only been with us a short time. Thank you for your kind donations for the food bank also. They are always so very grateful for our donations and particularly this year when finances are hard for so many.

This definitely seems an odd way around to celebrate things! Christmas, then Harvest. Whatever next!

Enrichment

At Witchampton First School, enrichment is woven directly into the life of the school. Experiences that build character, foster environmental stewardship, and connect children with their local community are given equal priority alongside academic learning.

On Friday afternoons during the final hour of the day, we launched our brand-new Enrichment Session! Our staff have drawn on their personal passions and talents to share unique skills with the children.

So far, Mrs Greaves has been waltzing through ballroom dancing, Mr Jenkinson has bravely taken on recorder club, Miss Snape leads our keen bird-watching group, and Miss Murphy is inspiring young builders in a creative construction session.

The children have been thoroughly engaged, and the atmosphere across the school has been fantastic. Everyone will have the opportunity to try a new activity when groups rotate after half term.



Living out our faith and preparing for our SIAMS Inspection

Living Out Our Faith: Preparing for Our SIAMS Inspection

As a Voluntary Aided Church of England school within the Diocese of Salisbury, Witchampton First School is deeply rooted in its distinctive Christian identity. As we approach our upcoming Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS), we want to share what this means for our community and what parents can expect during the inspection process.

Our Church School Ethos & Vision

Our school vision is at the heart of everything we do:

"Live a life of love, just as Jesus loved us." — Ephesians 5:2

Supported by our core theological values—Love, Courage, and Inspiration—our vision shapes our curriculum, our inclusive relationships, our collective worship, and our pastoral care. It calls our entire school family to embody Christ's unconditional love through care, inclusion, forgiveness, and service.

Whether through daily worship, outdoor learning, or community leadership, we strive to ensure every child understands that they are uniquely made in the image of God (Imago Dei) and nurtured to flourish in mind, body, and spirit.

What is SIAMS?

SIAMS is the inspection framework designed specifically for Church of England schools. Unlike an Ofsted inspection (which focuses primarily on academic standards and curriculum design), SIAMS evaluates how effective our theologically rooted Christian vision is in enabling pupils and adults to flourish.

The inspector explores key areas including:

- Christian Vision & Values: How our vision drives strategic decisions, relationships, and pupil wellbeing.
- Collective Worship: How daily worship provides inspirational, inclusive, and invitational opportunities for spiritual growth.
- Religious Education (RE): How RE learning develops religious literacy, moral understanding, and respect for worldviews.
- Spiritual Development: How we nurture awe, wonder, reflection, and big questions across the curriculum.

What Can Parents Expect During the Inspection?

SIAMS inspectors evaluate how the school's Christian ethos impacts our whole community—including our families.

1. Advance Notification: Parents will receive formal notice ahead of the inspection day outlining the schedule and details.

2. Parent Voice Opportunities: The inspector will invite feedback from parents. This may include:
 - A short online survey or questionnaire.
 - An informal discussion opportunity at the school gate or during drop-off/pick-up times.
3. Focus on Community & Pastoral Care: The inspector will be interested in how the school supports your child's emotional and spiritual wellbeing, how our core values translate into positive behaviour and relationships, and how well you feel included in the life of our church school family.
4. Normal School Routines: Children will experience their normal school routines, including daily collective worship and engaging classroom learning.

How You Can Support

- Talk with Your Child: Ask your child about our core values (Love, Courage, Inspiration) and what they enjoy about worship, RE, and daily life at school.
- Share Your Views: If invited to complete a survey or speak with the inspector, please share your open and honest experiences of our school community.

We are tremendously proud of our Church of England identity and look forward to celebrating how our vision enables every child at Witchampton to "live a life of love" and flourish fully.



Shout outs

Wedding Bells at Witchampton! 🛎

Congratulations to the new Mrs Matthews (née Miss Snape), who got married a couple of weeks ago! The children were thrilled to celebrate with her when she arrived at school in her wedding dress.

A Huge Thank-You to Our School Family!

It takes a village to make our school thrive, and we want to recognise some special groups of people this half term:

- Local School Committee: Thank you to our LSC members for offering challenge and support, conducting school visits, writing reports, and undertaking lots of training. We truly appreciate your time!
- Cheese & Wine Night Organisers: Thank you to Gabby Stone, Bryony Butcher and the team of helpers that made this night a huge success for our community and raised funds for our school and community play park.
- Open the Book: Thank you to our amazing local volunteers who bring Bible stories to life through acting—the children love your visits!
- Parents Group: Thank you for all your hard work planning events and funding new equipment. We are delighted to announce that new books are on their way thanks to your generosity!
- Reading Volunteers: Thank you to the parents who come into school to hear readers; it makes a real difference to the children's confidence.
- Miss Murphy: A special shout-out to Miss Murphy for running our fantastic Facebook page and keeping our school on the map!
- Our Parents: Thank you for getting the children here on time and responding to our frequent letters. We receive a lot of information, but we love creating as many enrichment opportunities as possible for the children!



Autumn is upon us and is always a nice time to think about shredding the layers and protecting ourselves by looking after ourselves and people close to us.

As we step into the beauty of Autumn, how can we slow down and notice God's hand in the changing world around us—in the crisp air, the vibrant leaves, and the shifting seasons?

What is one blessing or moment from this new school year so far that you are thankful to God for, and how can you hold onto that gratitude as the days grow shorter?

How can you bring warmth and light to those around you this term through quiet acts of kindness, gentle words, or supporting a friend in need?

The Bible reminds us, "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

As nature prepares to rest and reflect, what hopes, prayers, or quiet dreams would you like to place in God's hands for the term ahead?



November Timetable

All regular sessions delivered online via zoom, 90 minutes long
£24 each or FREE with School Membership

Book online at facefamilyadvice.co.uk

Recordings available for 48 hours

Introduction to OCD	2 Nov 10am
Raising Self-Esteem	2 Nov 7pm
Supporting Healthy Sleep	3 Nov 10am
Decreasing Depression	3 Nov 7pm
Supporting a Child with ADHD	9 Nov 10am
Understanding Addictive Behaviour	9 Nov 7pm
What is ACT?	10 Nov 10am
Improving Family Communication	10 Nov 7pm
Autism: Improving Communication	16 Nov 10am
Supporting Healthy Screen Use	16 Nov 7pm
Understanding the Teenage Brain	17 Nov 10am
Understanding Anger	17 Nov 7pm
FREE - Responding to Stress & Anxiety	19 Nov 7-8pm
Anxiety Explained	23 Nov 10am
Facing Defiance	23 Nov 7pm
Cannabis & Ketamine Awareness	24 Nov 10am
School Anxiety	24 Nov 7pm



Join the Dorset Mental Health Support Team for Schools for a webinar designed for parents of young people in year 6 and below who are interested in learning tools to support challenging behaviour at home.

This session provides information on how to respond to children when their behaviour becomes challenging. The sessions covers the theory of behaviour as communication, the importance of play, and the power of positive praise to encourage behaviours parents would like to see more of.

It includes practical tools that parents can use to support children when they are dysregulated.

**Fill this brief form in, and
watch the recording now:**

<https://forms.office.com/e/ti9YfB6pWQ>

enquires to: dhc.mhsteam.northandeastdorset@nhs.net
To leave feedback: <https://gthr.co.uk/d34c>