Newsletter – Friday 13th Novemebr 2026
St Mary's Primary School

Our Vision: We believe, we achieve, we suceed in God's family.

With God, all things are possible. Matthew 19:26

School Value - Community

Welcome

Dear Parents, Carers, and Members of our School Community,

As the colder weather settles in, please remember to send children into school with plenty of warm clothing and extra layers for their weekly Forest School sessions. Wellies, warm coats, hats, gloves and cosy layers will help everyone stay warm, comfortable and ready to enjoy their outdoor adventures whatever the weather!

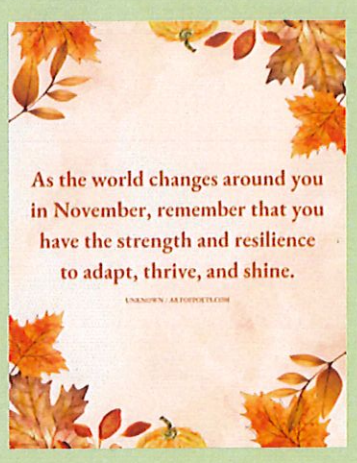
Our annual pantomime trip is booked, and payments are now available on ParentPay. We will be heading to Billericay Theatre to enjoy a performance of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. If parents and carers could please arrange payment via ParentPay, we would be very grateful. We are looking forward to a fantastic festive outing!

FOREST SCHOOL sessions this coming week. Acorn Class, Friday AM session, Chestnut Class, Thursday AM session, Oak Class, Thursday PM session.

We would also encourage you to take a little time to look through our diary dates, as we have an action-packed December ahead, full of exciting activities, special events and festive fun with lots of opportunities for parents to come into school! 🎄✨

Thank you, as always, for your continued support. We're looking forward to a wonderful month ahead!

Mindful Moments





Dojo Messages

- TTRS Trust Competition
- Panto Payment Reminder
- Outstanding School Values
- Friday 13th Celebrations!
- Reception Admissions Update
- Essex Fire Museum Open Days
- Lockdown Procedure
- Remembrance Service
- Flu Vaccine Heroes
- School Photos Live
- Reminder for Friday's acivities!
- Pupil wellbeing and attendance survey
- Christmas Dinner



A Note from Mrs Walker

It has been another busy and exciting week at St Mary's!

It has been lovely to welcome lots of new families into school recently for tours as they explore our 2027 Reception places. We have thoroughly enjoyed showing off our wonderful school, sharing what makes our school so special and giving prospective families a glimpse of life in our fantastic school community.

We are also incredibly proud of Harrison, Adeline C, Phoebe and Louisa, who represented both themselves and our school so beautifully at the Trust Maths Competition. They demonstrated fantastic commitment and enthusiasm, really bringing our school values of Community and Courage to life. A huge well done to you all – you are a credit to our school, and we are very proud of you!

A huge thank you to everyone who helped make today so special for the children. As part of Cultural Awareness Week, every class enjoyed an African drumming session, giving the children the opportunity to experience and celebrate a different culture. A massive thank you to FOSMS for funding this fantastic experience!
We also celebrated Children in Need, with everyone wearing their spots and taking part in lots of fun activities. Alongside this, we marked Anti-Bullying Week by wearing our odd socks and taking part in activities and discussions to help us learn about the importance of kindness, celebrating differences and standing up to bullying.

And what better way to finish such a busy day than with a disco! 🪩💃

A huge thank you once again to FOSMS for organising the fun and making sure the children had such a wonderful day. Finally, a big shout-out to all our amazing staff for their hard work, enthusiasm and dedication in making today so memorable for the children.

What a fantastic way to end the week! ❤️

THANKFULNESS ~ COMMUNITY ~ COMPASSION ~ TRUTHFULNESS ~ COURAGE ~ FORGIVENESS



Reading for Pleasure

We would love to encourage all of our families to make time for reading for pleasure at home. Reading together, sharing a story, listening to an audiobook, talking about a favourite book or simply allowing your child to choose something they enjoy can make such a difference. When children see reading as something fun, relaxing and enjoyable, rather than something they only do for school, they are more likely to develop a lifelong love of books and reading. Even just 10 minutes a day can open up new worlds, spark imagination, build vocabulary and strengthen children's reading skills. So, snuggle up, share a story, talk about what you're reading and most importantly, make reading a happy part of family life! ❤️📖

Primary Poetry Booklist

Recommended Poetry Books for Primary Children in KS2, KS1 and EYFS

On this primary poetry booklist, there is a selection of quality poetry books recommended for children aged 3-11. Scroll down to find the best children's poetry collections recommended for EYFS, KS1 and KS2.

We think that poetry is a superpower! It's the fastest way to inject rhythm, language play and brilliant vocabulary into children's lives – as well as empathy and consideration of different perspectives (where else can children imagine being a pebble, or a caterpillar, or a stranger arriving on a shore?). Far from being a dusty genre, primary poetry is immediate, imaginative and one of the best tools for boosting reading in the classroom.

This poetry booklist is your essential resource for finding high-quality poetry books for every primary age and stage. Whether you need an anthology packed with giggles for two-minute read-aloud slots like Whale of a Time, a collection to inspire a curriculum topic like A First Book of Dinosaurs, nature poetry like I Hear the Trees or engaging poetry on real-life themes like Overheard in a Tower Block, you'll find it here. We also have separate booklists for poetry for KS3 and KS2 verse novels.

Explore the expertly curated booklists and let's bring the wonder of poetry to every child.

Poetry for Early Years/Reception (Ages 3-5)
Poetry for Key Stage 1 (Ages 5-7)
Poetry for Lower Key Stage 2 (Ages 7-9)
Poetry for Upper Key Stage 2 (Ages 9-11)











Acorn Class

This Week In Class

This week in Acorn Class, we started our new science unit on plants. We worked on 'what is a plant ?' We looked at a wide variety of plants e.g. pineapples growing, cactuses in a desert and seaweed and asked if these are plants or not. They all were! Then we went outside and found plants growing in odd places, plants with flowers on and plants taller than we are, amoung others. In class, reception planted some cress seeds and talked about what they need to grow. Year 1 and 2 started a bean investigation - exactly what will happen when we alter one and when we don't water one. It was amazing to see that the beans with water actually grew broader in just a day!

Year 2 took on their first PiXL assessments this week, working on maths, reading and grammar. They took to this extremely positive, with some even saying, "I love assessments!" These will allow us to see what has been retained so far from this year and previously, and what we should recover and redevelop.

Year 1 and 2 also had time to plan their own four-part story about a boat trip, and then write it.

Reception continue to work on their recognition of phonics sounds and blending, now using the magnetic letters and whiteboards with ten letters on to allow them to blend and read words such as pit, pin, pot, mat, mad, sit, man and many more!

This week and last week, we began our art work on printing, with large-scale hand, finger and footprints!

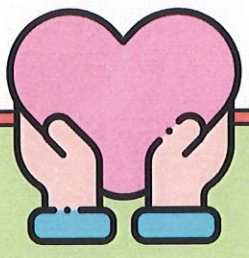
Love Your Learning

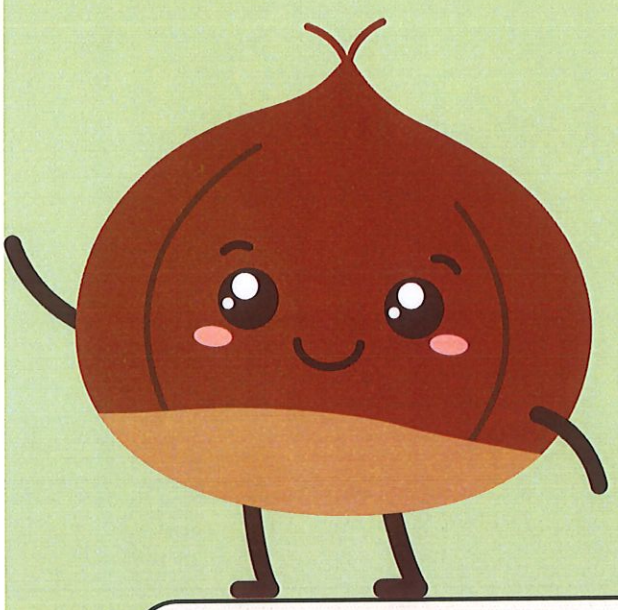
This week George S has been recognised as our achiever because we want to celebrate that after a good few weeks of school he has always been ready for anything. He is patient, he is thoughtful, he watches carefully, and he will always do the right thing. He always tries his best in every lesson and activity. Well done Georege!



Caught You Caring

This week Oscar S was Caught Caring. Oscar has being really brave and making good choices this half term. Well done Oscar!











Chestnut Class

This Week In Class

In our Vipers reading sessions this week we hvae looked at Humpty Dumpty as a narrative and other children have been reading in Read Write inc. In English we have been writing our persuasive letters. In maths we have been adding across boundaries which some of us found tricky but we all tried our best. We are very proud of ourselves with the Berlesduna Trust TTRS competition becuase we came 2nd out of 11 schools and 6th out of 82 classes. We're also very proud of our four mathematicians who represented us at the Trust Maths competition - well done girls and boys

I was very impressed with how sensible and respectful the children were this week during our two minutes silence. They also created some lovely work about Remembrance Day. In History we looked at train maps from different years and wrote about what we thought about how the number of train lines had changed. In music we started to learn our songs for the Carol Concert and we also decorated baubles for our school Christmas tree that will be going in the church.

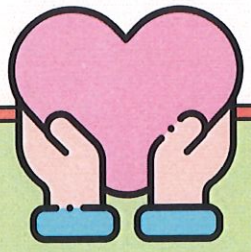
Love Your Learning

This weeks achiver is Bobbi-Rae for her excellent enthusiasm and energy in our African drumming workshop.
I was very impressed with her skills.



Caught You Caring

This week Eve was caught caring. Eve volunteered to dry a wet book bag and its contents during film club. Well done Eve!











Oak Class

This Week In Class

This week in Oak class, we have focused on retrieving information from texts in our reading lessons. We have also learnt what modal verbs are and how, as auxiliary verbs, they alter the degree of certainty expressed by the main verb. In maths, we been adding and subtracting fractions by using our knowledge of multiples to identify common denominators. In history, we have used a map of Europe in 1914 to learn about the alliances of World War 1 and have used these to look at the geographical advantage held by the Triple Entente. In RE, we have looked at historical Islamic Art traditions and used this information to create our own interpretations and in science, we have begun our new unit, learning about forces.

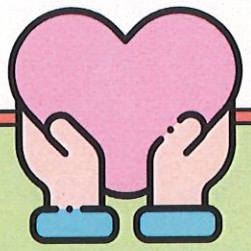
Love Your Learning

The achiever in Oak class this week Aimee. Aimee has shown real determination and perseverance this week. She has continued to come into school each day with a willingness to try her best and has made a particularly good effort to adapt to the changes in our timetable this week. She also stepped outside her comfort zone on class photograph day, showing great courage. Well done, Aimee - we are very proud of you!



Caught You Caring

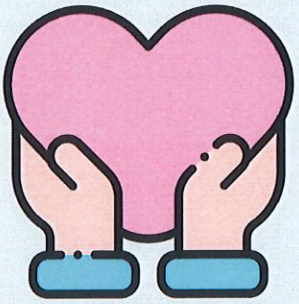
This week River as caught caring. River has been super kind and caring to the Reception children. River helped them change for PE and helped them during their PE lesson. Well done River





Caught you Caring

Teachers and staff are invited to submit the names of pupils they "catch caring" along with a brief description of the act of kindness they observed. These moments will then be shared and celebrated, helping to reinforce our school values and inspire others to follow their example.



Lilly-May Smith
Lilly-May was caught caring bring a top button expert for lots of people across Acorn Class before of after PE. Well done Lilly-May!

Lexie Mead
Lexie was caught caring for patiently and positively supporting a younger child in computing.
Well done Lexie!

Luna Hearn
Luna was caught caring offering a supportive hug to a child who had fallen outside.
Well done Luna!

Demi Hearn
Volunteering to tidy up the home corner after children had been playing.
Well done Demi!

Freya Hazeltine
Volunteering to tidy up the home corner after children had been playing. Well done Freya!

George Smith
Volunteering to tidy up the home corner after children had been playing.
Well done George!

Olive Bond
Helping the younger children in Acorn class tidy their garden during lunchtime. Well done Olive!

Attendance

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

On Time: First Time, Every Time



Which CIRCLE are you in?

TARGETS

Whole School Attendance Target is: 95%

National Attendance Target is: 93.5%

Whole School Attendance this week is: 93.59%

Pupils with 100% attendance this week: 52

THIS WEEK

Reception	99%
Year 1	82%
Year 2	97%
Year 3	98%
Year 4	86%
Year 5	95%
Year 6	93%

LATENESS

Collective Worship will be held at 9.05am each morning and attended by all staff, including the office staff. It is important that your child arrives on time for school. If they arrive after 9.05am then you will need to wait with your child until Collective Worship has finished at 9.20am as there will not be any staff to let them in. Collective Worship is a legal entitlement in a Church of England school and a time of reflection and respect.

STUDYBUGS

If your child is absent from school please:

- Contact the school via Studybugs on the first day of absence before 9.00am . (This is our preferred method of communication for sickness absence)
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9.00am;
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible.

If you haven't already, please download the free studybugs app, or register on the studybugs website and use it to tell us whenever your child is ill and unable to attend school.
The tool helps us to know sooner if your child is unaccounted for. It is quick and easy to register and automatically reminds you to keep us posted. Please use the following link to register:
https://studybugs.com/about/parentsIf you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school office

Safeguarding
at St Mary's Primary School

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY.



Our commitment

At St Mary's Primary School we are committed to ensuring that every child feels safe, valued, listened to and supported.

What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding means protecting children from abuse, neglect, exploitation and other forms of harm, both in school and outside school, including online. It also means promoting children's welfare and helping them to achieve the best possible outcomes.

What does our Safeguarding Policy cover?

Our policy explains how we:

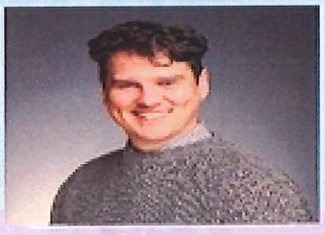
- Protect children from abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Identify concerns early and provide appropriate help and support
- Respond to bullying, child-on-child abuse and harmful behaviour
- Promote online safety and help children understand how to keep themselves safe
- Support children's mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Work in partnership with parents, carers and external agencies
- Ensure staff understand their safeguarding responsibilities and know how to report concerns

Our Safeguarding Team

Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Deputy DSLs lead safeguarding and child protection arrangements in school.



Ms Walker
Executive Headteacher
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)



Mr Austin
Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL)

Working together

We work in partnership with families, staff and relevant agencies to keep children safe. We listen to children and make sure their voice is at the heart of what we do. We take concerns seriously and act on them.



How to report a concern

If you are worried about the safety or wellbeing of your child or another child, please contact the school office and ask to speak to the DSL or one of the deputy DSLs.

Please share any concerns as soon as possible so that we can consider what support or action may be needed.

All concerns are taken seriously

Information is handled sensitively and shared with relevant professionals where necessary to protect a child.

If a child is in immediate danger, contact the emergency services.

The full policy

Our full Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is available on the school website.

If you have any questions about safeguarding at our school, please contact the school office.

FOREST SCHOOL

THIS WEEK

This week at Forest School, the children began working on a very special festive project - making their own wooden Christmas decorations! Each class had a different design to create, giving everyone the opportunity to make something unique and get creative in preparation for the festive season.

The children worked incredibly hard, using their imagination and creativity to decorate their wooden shapes and transform them into colourful, festive decorations. It was lovely to see how much care and effort they put into their work, with everyone adding their own special touches to make their decorations stand out. There was lots of enthusiasm and excitement as the children began to see their creations come to life.

We are delighted to be able to sell the finished decorations at St Mary's Christmas Gift Sale on Friday 4th December. All money raised will go towards buying new resources and equipment for Forest School, helping us to provide even more exciting activities and opportunities for the children to enjoy. We hope you will come along, support the children and perhaps take home a handmade Christmas decoration of your own.

Alongside our Christmas craft activities, the children also enjoyed plenty of free play. They had the opportunity to get creative with conkers, pinecones and colourful pipe cleaners, using their imaginations to make all sorts of interesting little creations. The mud kitchen was also a popular choice, with lots of mixing, experimenting and imaginative play taking place. The children also had great fun enjoying the log swing, making the most of their time outdoors and playing together in our Forest School area.

Another fantastic week of Forest School, well done St Mary's!

Miss Wilson
Forest School Lead

Collective Worship

This week...

This week, Mrs Carlier led a wonderful assembly on the theme 'A Community That Cares', encouraging the children to think about how we can support people in our local community who may be struggling to afford food.

The children explored what it means to look after one another and discussed why some families might need a little extra help. Mrs Carlier introduced the work of food banks, explaining the types of food that might be included in an emergency food parcel and how these essential services support people during difficult times.

The children learnt about Chelmsford Foodbank, which provides three days of nutritionally balanced emergency food for local people experiencing a crisis. They discovered that the foodbank relies on the generosity of volunteers and donations from individuals, schools, churches and local businesses. As well as providing food, the foodbank offers a listening ear and helps people access further support when they need it.

Mrs Carlier shared a thought-provoking video with the children, encouraging them to consider why a foodbank visit is about so much more than receiving a bag of food. It can also mean being listened to, treated with dignity, welcomed without judgement and signposted towards additional support.
The children reflected on some important questions:

- How might someone feel if they were worried about asking for help?
- What could a volunteer say or do to make someone feel welcome?
- Why might a family need support to afford food?
- Why is it important to treat everyone with kindness and respect?
- How can one small action make a big difference to someone else?

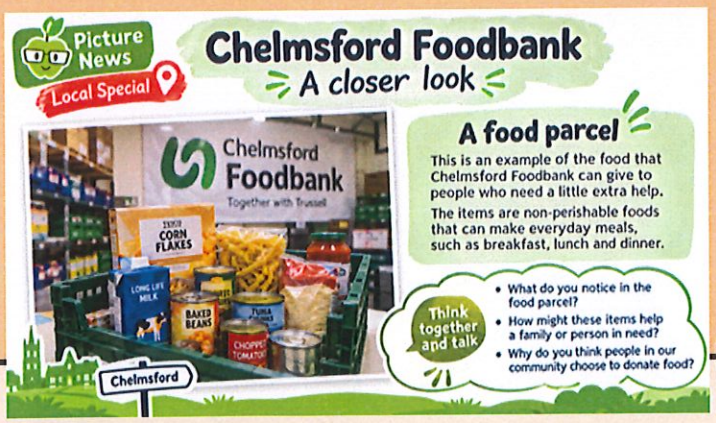
The discussions encouraged the children to think about whether helping those in need is the responsibility of individuals, organisations or the whole community.

We also explored this message from a Christian perspective through Mark 12:31: "Love your neighbour as yourself." Christians believe this means caring for others, showing compassion and recognising that every person is valuable and deserves kindness and respect.

Finally, the children considered how we can put these values into action. We discussed the importance of finding out what a foodbank currently needs before organising a collection, sharing accurate information about the support available and encouraging our school community to make thoughtful donations.

Most importantly, the children were reminded that we can all make a difference through the way we treat others. A kind word, a listening ear or a small act of generosity can mean so much to someone facing a difficult time.

Together, we can help build a community where everyone feels valued, supported and cared for.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Activity	Who
16-20.11.26	Anti Bullying Week and Road Safety Week	Whole School
04.12.26	FOSMS Christmas Sale - Parents welcome into school from 2:30pm	Whole School
08.12.26	Christmas Panto - Billericay Theatre Christmas Jumpers to be worn with uniform	Whole School
14-18.12.26	No Afterschool Clubs this week with the exception of Multi Skills Club	Whole School
11.12.26	Christingle service at St Mary's Church	All welcome 2PM
16.12.26	DT Day	Parents welcome in from 2:45pm
16th, 17th and 18th Dec	Christmas Jumpers to be worn with uniform for these days!	Whole School
16.12.26	EYFS Christmas Craft afternoon	EYFS Parents from 2:15pm
17.12.26	FOSMS Movie Night – 2:30 – 4pm	Tickets on sale soon
18.12.26	KS1 Nativity - 9:30am-10:30am. Reception, Yr 1 and Yr 2 only.	Parents in from 9:30am
18.12.26	Christmas Carol Concert in School Hall. Yr 3, Yr 4, Yr 5 and Yr 6.	Parents in from 2:30pm

NEW TERMLY MENU



This is our new Autumn Term menu which begins on 3rd September and runs through to taking us right up to Christmas. This is now published on ParentPay for bookings. We work a week in advance for bookings. The deadline for bookings is 12pm Friday for the following week.





	Meat-free Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Tomato and basil pasta V with garlic bread and side salad or Cheese / tuna baguette	Pitta bread pizza with cheese V or ham with potato wedges and side salad or Cheese / ham baguette	Roast chicken or Quorn fillet V with roast potatoes, veg and gravy or Cheese / ham baguette	Cheesy ham and broccoli pasta or Cheesy broccoli pasta V Cheese / ham baguette or Jacket potato with cheese / beans / tuna	Sausage Chips and Beans, or Quorn Sausages Chips and Beans V Cheese / ham / tuna baguett
	Fruit & yoghurt	Fruit & yoghurt	Fruit & yoghurt	Fruit & yoghurt	Baked treat
Week 2	Cheese and tomato pasta V with garlic bread and side salad or Cheese / tuna baguette	Fish Fingers, Chips, Peas & Sweetcorn or Veggie Fingers V or ham with potato wedges and side salad or Cheese / ham baguette	Sausage roast or Quorn sausage roast V or Cheese / ham baguette	Meatball or no meat ball V pasta bake with salad or Cheese / ham baguette or Jacket potato with cheese / beans / tuna	Chicken nuggets or Quorn nuggets V with potato wedges and beans or Cheese / ham / tuna baguette
	Fruit & yoghurt	Fruit & yoghurt	Fruit & yoghurt	Fruit & yoghurt	Baked treat

Clubs

Autumn Term After School Clubs Sept - Dec 2026

We are delighted to confirm that we will be providing the Clubs below from September 2026.

Clubs will run up to W/C Monday 7th December.

No Clubs will run on the last week of term with the exception of Multi Skills with Mr Thomas

KS1 & KS2 Multi Skills Club – Monday 3.15pm – 4.00pm
This after school club is available for all year groups and will be run by Mr Thomas. Please book direct with Mr Thomas as per the flyer.

KS1 & KS2 Film Club – Tuesday 3.15pm – 4.15pm
This after school club is available for all year groups and will be run by Mrs Carlier. Currently full, with a waiting list.

KS1 & KS2 Lego Club –Wednesday 3.15pm – 4.15pm
This after school club is available for all year groups and will be run by Mrs Richardson. Currently full, with a waiting list.

Year 6 Tutoring Club – Thursday 3.15pm – 4.15pm
This after school club is available for Year 6 and will be run by Mr Austin. (This will be managed in groups throughout the year).

KS1 & KS2 Coding Club – Thursday 3.15pm – 4.15pm
This after school club is available for all year groups and will be run by Mr Gatenby. We have spaces available on this club.

Friends of St Mary's School - FOSMS

Welcome to the Autumn Term!

Autumn inspires reflection, change, and beauty, reminding us to embrace transformation and the richness of life.

Welcome Friends!

🎄 We are looking forward to a very busy and exciting Christmas period here at FOSMS, with lots of festive fun planned to help raise valuable funds for our children!

🎁 Christmas Raffle
We would be incredibly grateful for any donations to help make our Christmas raffle a bumper one! If you are able to donate a prize or know of a local business that might be happy to support us, we would love to hear from you. Raffle tickets will go on sale from Monday 30th November, and we can't wait to see what fantastic prizes we can offer!

🎅 FOSMS Christmas Sale – Friday 4th November
We are looking forward to welcoming you into school from 2:30pm for our FOSMS Christmas Sale. There will be lots of lovely little Christmas gifts and festive goodies for sale, alongside some fun little games to help raise money for our children. We are also hoping to bring back our Christmas book stall, which was super popular last year! If you have any children's books or other books in good condition that you would be happy to donate, we would be delighted to take them off your hands. Please drop any donations into the school office. Thank you so much for your support!

🎬 Christmas Movie Night
We also have our Christmas Movie Night coming up, which we are really looking forward to! I'll be sharing more details with you very soon, so keep an eye out for further information.

As always, thank you for your continued support. Every donation, purchase and bit of help makes a real difference and helps us provide wonderful opportunities and experiences for our children.

Let's make it a magical Christmas at FOSMS! ❤️

Coins in a Jar

Coins in a Jar is back! Will Acorn Class be the victors for a third year running??

Any spare change you have please do give it to your child to bring in and pop in their class bottle. As always the winning class have their funds matched up to £100!

Can you help?

As always, we can only run our fun events and raise money for our school with help from volunteers. If you feel you could spare a few hours or share some new ideas over the course of the school year to lend a hand, we would love to hear from you!

contact@fosms.co.uk

BERLESDUNA
ACADEMY TRUST

BERLESDUNA VACANCIES

MARCH 2026

Cherry Tree Primary School and Nursery
Class Teacher (Part-time). Applications close 15th December 2026. Interviews to be confirmed.

Crays Hill Primary School
HLTA. Applications close 24th November 2026. Interviews 26th November 2026.

Merrylands Primary School and Nursery
Class Teacher (fixed term contract). Applications close 27th November 2026. Interviews week commencing 7th December 2026.

St Mary's CofE Primary School
SEND Learning Support Assistant. Applications close 27th November 2026. Interviews 4th December 2026.

St Nicholas CofE Primary School
Cleaner (with Key Holder responsibilty). Applications close 16th November 2026. Interviews 19th November 2026.

Whitmore Primary School and Nursery
Part-time Class Teacher (fixed term contract). Applications close 24th November 2026. Interviews to be confirmed.

Willows Primary School and Nursery
SEND Learning Support Assistant. Applications close 27th November 2026. Interviews 4th December 2026.

https://www.berlesduna.co.uk/information/vacancies/

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We expect all staff and volunteers to share our commitment. All successful applicants will be subject to an enhanced DBS check, medical clearance and satisfactory references. We are an equal opportunities employer.

Gentle Reminders

RECEPTION 2027

As you may be aware, the primary school (Reception) admission round opened on 9 November 2026, for parents of children to apply for a Reception school place for the academic year that starts in September 2027.

The statutory national closing date for applications is 15 January 2027.

Applications can be made online via www.essex.gov.uk/admissions. 99% of parents in Essex applied online last year.

All of the application information is available on the website above.

For any parents with children due to start Reception next September please be reminded that you need to apply by the deadline of 15 January 2027. Even if you have a sibling at school, you will need to apply if you have a child due to start Reception next September.

The website www.essex.gov.uk/admissions also has a copy of the Primary Education in Essex 2027-28 booklet and the Schools Admissions Policies Directories contain details of all admission policies.

PARKING

We appreciate that parking can be challenging, particularly at busy drop-off and pick-up times, and thank you for your patience and understanding.

We would kindly ask everyone to please be considerate of our neighbours when parking and ensure that no vehicles are parked across or blocking residents' driveways. Even just a small infringement over a driveway can hinder our neighbours from entering or leaving their property.

Our neighbours need to be able to access their properties at all times, and we really appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain positive relationships with those living in our local community.

Thank you for your understanding and for continuing to be so considerate.