



Newsletter - Friday 13th March 2026

St Mary's Primary School

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

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

School Value - Forgiveness

Welcome

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

As we move further into the term, it continues to be a pleasure to see the enthusiasm, curiosity, and resilience our pupils bring to school each day. Their commitment to learning and the positive attitudes they demonstrate in classrooms and around the school truly reflect the supportive community we are proud to be part of.

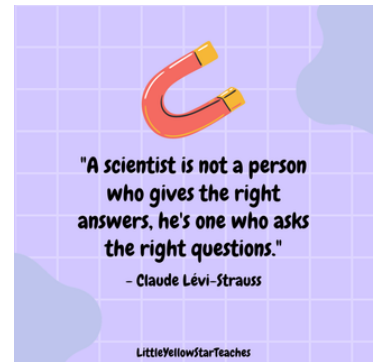
This week we have enjoyed a number of engaging lessons and activities across the school, with pupils showing great determination and creativity in their work. It has also been wonderful to see students supporting one another, building friendships, and demonstrating the values that sit at the heart of our school.

Thank you, as always, to our staff for their continued dedication and to parents and carers for the support you provide at home. Working together makes a real difference to our pupils' success and wellbeing.

Please take a moment to read through the rest of the newsletter to see some of the highlights from the week and important updates for the weeks ahead.

Wishing you all a wonderful weekend - Mrs. Walker

Mindful Moments



Dojo Messages

- Forest School Request for Items
- Big Swim, Little Swim lessons - Easter
- Changes to Support Funds
- Trust Science Challenge
- Science Fair Reminder
- Lunch bookings reminder



A note from Mrs Walker

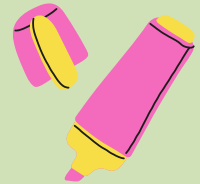
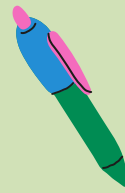
This week we have been celebrating Science Week across the school, and it has been wonderful to see our classrooms filled with excitement, curiosity and discovery. Pupils have been taking part in a variety of hands-on experiments and investigations, exploring scientific ideas through observation, discussion and practical learning. From testing predictions to asking thoughtful questions about how and why things happen, it has been fantastic to see so many inquisitive minds at work. Events like these help to nurture a love of learning and encourage children to think creatively and critically about the world around them. We hope you enjoyed seeing the fruits of the children's hard work.

We would also like to say a huge congratulations to Albie, Henry, Finlay and Wilfred, who represented our school wonderfully at the Trust Science Challenge this week. They demonstrated excellent teamwork, enthusiasm and problem-solving skills throughout the event and were fantastic ambassadors for our school. We are very proud of the way they approached the challenge and the positive attitude they showed.

A sincere thank you also for your support with our Mother's Day / Significant Female Sale. The event is always a lovely opportunity for the children to choose a small gift for someone special in their lives, and it was heartwarming to see the care and thought they put into their selections. Your support helps make these moments possible and greatly contributes to the sense of community within our school.

We hope that those celebrating enjoy the thoughtful gifts chosen by the children, and we would like to wish all of our mothers, grandmothers and significant female figures in our school community a very happy and restful Mothering Sunday.

THANKFULNESS ~ COMMUNITY ~ COMPASSION ~ TRUTHFULNESS ~ COURAGE ~ FORGIVENESS



Acorn Class

This Week In Class

Acorn Class have really enjoyed Science week and so has Mrs Smith! We have completed so many experiments and had lots of fun! We have learnt about chemical reactions and surface tension. We have also learnt about carbonation and buoyancy. We have also learnt that not all experiments work first time and sometimes you need to be patient and change things and try again.

Achiever

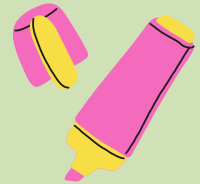
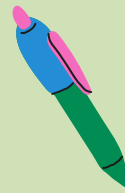
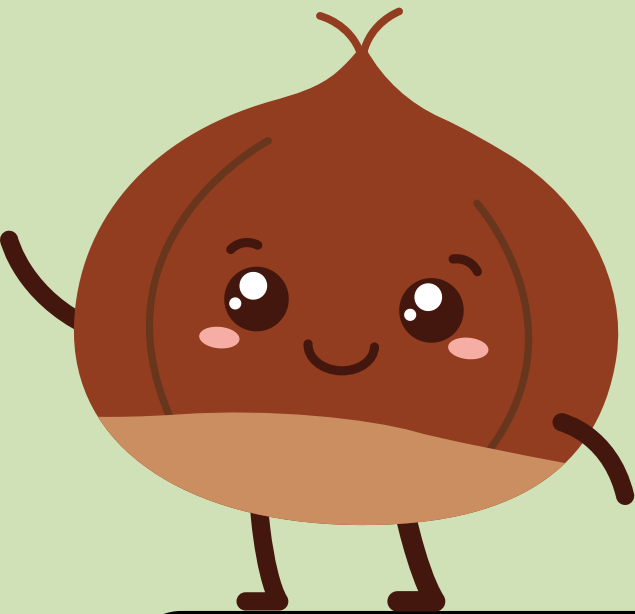
Due to our science fair we did not have an achievers assembly this week - Our selected children will roll on to next week. Watch this space!



Value Achiever

Due to our science fair we did not have an achievers assembly this week - Our selected children will roll on to next week. Watch this space!





Chestnut Class

This Week In Class

This week has been a wonderful Science Week. We have carried out many different experiments, such as does buttered toast always land face down? Which material is the best for a boat? We have all completed entries for the poster competition and we have had some lovely ideas and creative thinking. In maths we did some White Rose lessons and also looked at data for our experiments. Once we had collected the data we presented our findings in Bar Charts. In English we have started to write instructions for how to complete one of our experiments. The children worked in pairs to create stand up posters to show what we have learned in science week.

Achiever

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Oak Class

This Week In Class

This week in Oak class, we have created verbs using suffixes in our grammar lessons and identified appropriate synonyms in our reading lessons. In maths, we have found equivalent fractions, decimals and percentages. We have had a lot of fun completing investigations for Science Week including creating our own recycled paper, manufacturing bird's nests and designing cars suitable for use on the moon.

Achiever

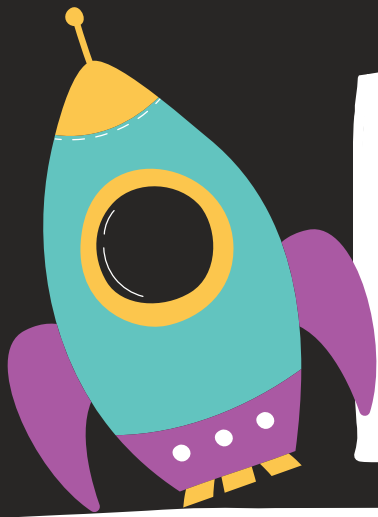
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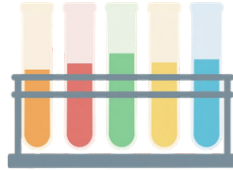




SCIENCE WEEK

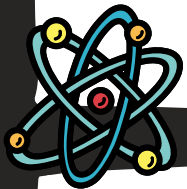
ACORN CLASS

This week the children have taken part in several experiments, making volcanoes, testing solubility and water density with Skittle sweets and designing paper aeroplanes to find out which design flies the furthest. The children have had a super time and have taken time to write about their experiments and designed flyers. Well done to Acorn Class!



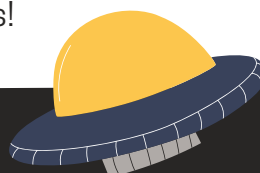
CHESTNUT CLASS

This week Mrs Carlier asked the children some questions. The children carried out experiments to see if their theories were correct, they were able to see if their predictions were right! Does toast always fall butter side down? What material makes the best boat? What flies the best a paper aeroplane or a helicopter? We have had lots of fun experimenting and putting our theories to the test.



OAK CLASS

This week the children in Oak Class took part in a number of experiments. They recycled their own paper and studied the science behind bird's nest construction and then put their learning into action creating their own birds nests. Nice work Oak Class!



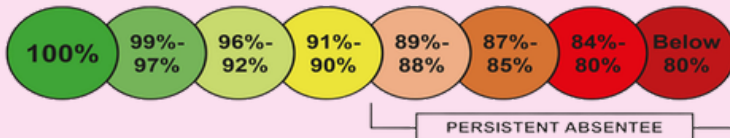


Attendance



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

On Time: First Time, Every Time



Which CIRCLE are you in?



THIS WEEK

Reception	75%
Year 1	96%
Year 2	92%
Year 3	98%
Year 4	95%
Year 5	96%
Year 6	95%

TARGETS

Whole School Attendance Target is: **92%**

National Attendance Target is: **93.5 %**

Whole School Attendance this week is: **93.05%**

Pupils with 100% attendance this week: **45**



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/parents> If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school office

FOREST SCHOOL



This Week



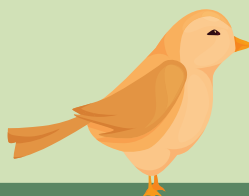
Acorn class had another busy and productive session this week. The children helped to plant some seeds with Mrs Smith and we look forward to seeing them grow over the spring. The children also helped finish building a table to the side of the mud kitchen. We carried up some tongue and groove cladding from the forest school area and placed the planks on top of a raised pallet, connecting them as we went and then fixed them to it using hammer and nails. This now gives the children a solid flat surface to create all their mud dishes and potions at the mud kitchen. The children also made little bug "apartments" by stuffing see through plastic cups with straw, leaves, soil and woodchips and then either hanging them from trees or placing them on the ground in amongst the bushes around the edge of the outdoor area. A great session again Acorn class, well done!

Chestnut class also had a busy and productive session this week. The children helped to weed and dig over the planters over at the allotment in readiness for planting vegetables and fruit after the Easter holidays. The children also made some bug "apartments" using the same materials as Acorn class, however, Chestnut class put theirs around the forest school area. The children also made some fruit and vegetables out of clay; the thinking behind this being that once they are set and dried, they can paint them and then place in our allotment to show what we are growing. Another fantastic session Chestnut class, well done!

Oak class were also very busy this week. The children helped to block off a gap between the old and the new school fence. The gap had been exposed after a lot of thorny bushes were cut back and logs removed. We used a pallet to do this and attached it to the fences using rope. To make it look a bit more natural and to make sure nobody could access the gap through the holes in the pallet, Sonny suggested that we slide logs down the gaps in the pallet. We did this and I have to say, it really does look much better than just having a pallet there. Well done Sonny! The children also had an opportunity to make something out of clay. The only rule was that it needed to be something "outdoorsy". We had some lovely creations, which will be ready for painting next week. Finally, we were on to the last activity, which was housing the bugs! I honestly think the resident bugs of St Mary's outdoor areas are quite possibly the best housed bugs in Essex as, just like Acorn and Chestnut class, Oak class made some bug "apartments" too. Well done Oak class, another fantastic session!

Freddie Forest Bear had a lovely time with Sophie last week and is now looking forward to going home with Evie-Rose from Acorn class for the weekend. Evie-Rose always enjoys forest school but this week she was very enthusiastic and super helpful when it came to clearing up at the end of the session. There were only two brooms available and although Evie-Rose was using one of them, another child was a little upset that she could not sweep so Evie-Rose gave her the broom she was using. She showed empathy and kindness, which was such a lovely thing to see. Well done Evie-Rose, enjoy your weekend with Freddie!

Miss Wilson
Forest School Lead



Collective Worship

This week...

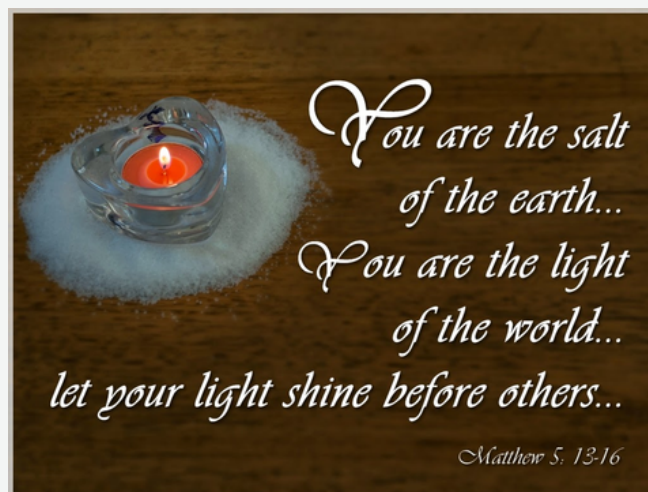
Rev. Jacqui led Collective Worship this week and spoke about how small things can make a big difference. She showed the children a photo of a salt shaker and explained how tiny grains of salt can change the taste of food, such as chips. Even though salt is small, it makes a big difference to everything it touches.

She then shared a verse from the Bible, Gospel of Matthew 5:13, where Jesus Christ says, "You are the salt of the earth." She asked the children if they thought Jesus meant that we should all become salt shakers. Rev. Jacqui explained that Jesus was using salt as a picture. He meant that the small, kind things we do can make life better for other people. Just like salt improves food, our actions can improve the world around us. When we do small acts of kindness, we can make a big difference.

The worship ended with the children singing a song about wanting to be the "salt of the earth" for Jesus. Rev. Jacqui encouraged everyone to think of one small thing they could do during the week to make someone else's day better.

Reflection:

This message reminds us that even the smallest acts of kindness can have a powerful impact. A smile, helping a friend, sharing, or saying something encouraging can brighten someone's day. Just as salt changes the flavour of food, our actions can positively influence the people and situations around us. By choosing to be kind and thoughtful each day, we can all help make our school and community a happier place.



UPCOMING EVENTS

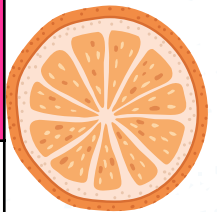
Date	Activity	Who
20th March	Red Nose Day - Wear something RED with your school uniform. Please see the flyer below for the donation link.	Whole School
23rd March	Yr 5 and 6 Parents Residential Meeting 2pm in the school hall.	Yr 5 & 6 Parents
24th March	SATS meeting and SRE meeting 3:15pm in the school hall.	Year 6 parents
25th March	EYFS Parent Partnership Session.	EYFS
25th March	Easter Performance - Parents and carers invited in for 2pm.	Whole School
27th March	Easter Service at St Marys Church - Parents and carers to attend 2-3pm.	Whole School
30th Mar - 10th Apr	HALF TERM	Whole School
13th April	Return to School	

TERMLY MENU

This is our new menu which begins on 23rd February and runs through to taking us right up to 27th March. This is now published on ParentPay for bookings. We work a week in advance for bookings. The deadline for bookings is 9am Monday 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	Sausage or Quorn sausage V with mash, peas and gravy or Cheese / ham baguette	Roast chicken or Quorn fillet V with roast potatoes, veg and gravy or Cheese / ham baguette	Beef bolognese or Quorn bolognese V pasta bake with side salad or Cheese / ham baguette or Jacket potato with cheese / beans / tuna	Fish fingers or veggie fingers V with chips, peas and sweetcorn or Cheese / ham / tuna baguette
	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	Pitta bread pizza with cheese 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

Spring Term After School Clubs February - March 2026

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

All after school clubs will be starting w/c 5th January 2026 through to w/c 23rd March 2026.

**Please note there will be no after school clubs
w/c 23rd March 2026 with the exception of Mr
Thomas' Multi Skills Club**

KS1 & KS2 Games & Creative Arts Club – Tuesday: 3.15pm – 4.15pm

This after school club is available for all year groups and will be run by Mrs Carlier

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 Beard

KS2 Netball Club – Wednesday 12:00pm – 1:00pm

This lunch club is available for KS2 and will be run by Miss Francis. PE Kit will need to be worn, no jewellery!

KS1 & KS2 Art Club – Wednesday 3.15pm – 4.15pm

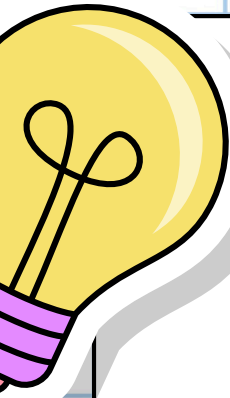
This after school club is available for all year groups and will be run by Mrs Fallon

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

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)

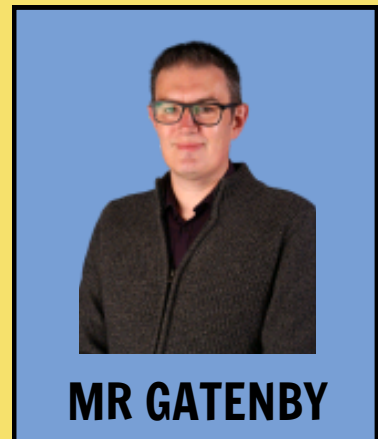


meet the **TEACHER**

ABOUT ME

A little about me to help the children and parents of St Mary's C of E know a little more about me before I begin after Easter.

I am very much looking forward to starting, having worked in the Berlesduna Academy Trust for the last six years and having visited St Mary's on quite a few very enjoyable occasions. I have been a teacher for many years, working in several different schools across Essex with many of these years teaching Key Stage 1 and also many years with older children. I live quite locally and attend Holy Trinity C of E services conducted by Reverend Jacqui, so it will be fantastic to be a part of the school she regularly attends.



MR GATENBY

I have a great interest in literacy as a whole, and am lucky enough to have been a phonics leader, a writing leader and a reading leader in several schools. Learning to speak with confidence is a vital skill, just as much as reading and learning to put those words into writing. Books can be relaxing and exciting at the same time, and reading can take us all to whole new worlds or help us understand the one we are in. I really enjoy helping children to learn to read, then to comprehend, and then to become a lifelong reader. I can promise you – I do read every single day.

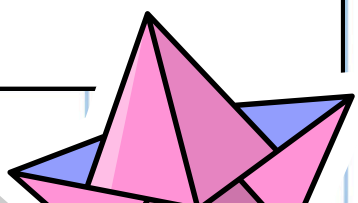
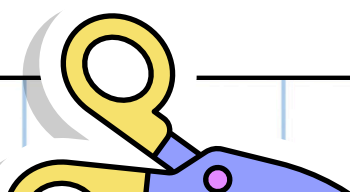
I am extremely lucky to have two sons of primary school age (although it won't be long before one is in secondary school!) and we have a young dog. We enjoy doing lots of fun things together in the local area, for example going to Call Of The Wild or Danbury Lakes.

As a teacher, I have worked with all kinds of children and families. I appreciate that all of us are individual and all have different starting points and strengths as well as areas to work on. I believe the main thing is that we should all try our best, whatever that looks like. That is what I will be doing!

I imagine that most of you will be wondering what it will be like to have a new teacher after the Easter holidays, and my plan is to keep all of the best things exactly the same, and try to make a few things even better. I know that it can be strange to have a new start, but within a few days everything will feel normal. If anyone does have any problems or worries, parent or child, please do come to me about them, and of course all of the other school adults will remain the same and will be happy to help.

Thank you very much for reading this and I look forward to seeing you in Acorn Class after Easter.

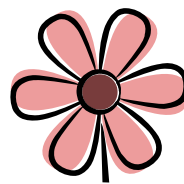
Mr Gatenby





Friends of St Mary's School

FOSMS



Welcome Spring!

Let's embrace the sunshine and fresh beginnings that Spring brings to our community!

Coins in a bottle

LAST CHANCE - We still have our coins in a bottle challenge running in the classrooms, this little challenge is live until the **end of March**. Every penny raised will be given back to the class to purchase fun resources for the last term. The winning class will have their amount matched (up to £100) by FOSMS, so all is to play for. Please do send in a few pennies for your class jar. Last year Acorn were the winners - can they do it again?

Donations

We are beginning to prepare for our Easter Raffle and would be very grateful for any prize donations. Items such as Easter eggs, chocolates, sweets, small gifts or toys would all be greatly appreciated. If you are able to donate, please send items into school with your child over the next couple of weeks.

Thank you for your continued support.

Mother's Day / Significant Female Sale

Thank you for supporting our Mother's Day / Significant Female Sale. We truly appreciate your support in helping make this a special event for the children.

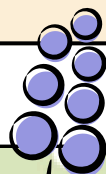
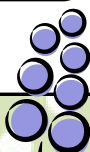
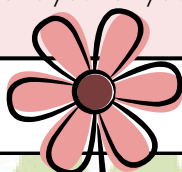
Wishing you all a wonderful Mother's Day, and we hope you enjoy the thoughtful gifts your children carefully picked out for you.



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

FEBRUARY 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.

Cherry Tree Primary School and Nursery
EYFS Teacher. Applications close 14th April 2026. Interviews 21st April 2026.

Downham Church of England Primary School
Class Teacher. Applications close 12th March 2026. Interviews 16th March 2026.

Fairhouse Primary School
Learning Support Assistant / SEN Support. Applications close 23rd March 2026. Interviews 26th March 2026. Class Teacher. Applications close 14th April 2026. Interviews 20th April 2026

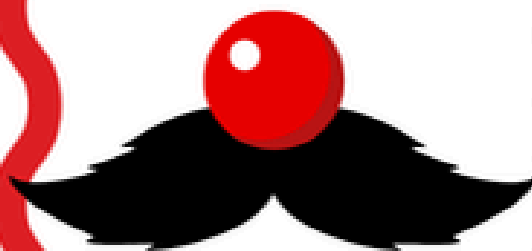
Merrylands Primary School and Nursery
Lead Teacher for Autism Spectrum Conditions. Applications close 19th April 2026. Interviews week commencing 27th April 2026.

Whitmore Primary School and Nursery
Class Teacher. Applications close: 22nd March 2026. Interviews 26th / 27th March 2026.
Assistant Headteacher. Applications close: 16th March 2026. Interviews 25th March 2026.



Red Nose Day

On Friday 20th March we are raising money for Red Nose Day by asking the children to wear something red with their uniform. Hair bows, socks, hat, red nose - be creative!



We would like your support to raise some vital funds for Comic Relief and we are asking if you could make a donation via our school fundraising page to the cause. We would ask for a minimum donation of £1 via <https://app.parentpay.com/ParentPayShop/Foc/Default.aspx?shopid=20836>

If your child would prefer to just wear their uniform that is of course absolutely welcomed.

