

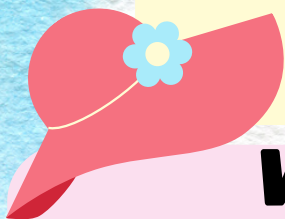
Newsletter – Friday 17th April 2026

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 – Truthfulness



Welcome

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

I hope you all had a restful and enjoyable break. It is a pleasure to welcome everyone back as we begin the summer term—always one of the most exciting and rewarding times in the school year.

This term is filled with opportunities for learning, growth, and celebration. From trips and sports days to performances and end-of-year milestones, there is much to look forward to. For our year 6 children, this is also a particularly important period as they prepare for assessments and the next stage of their journey. We wish them every success and will continue to support them every step of the way.

As always, our focus remains on providing a safe, inclusive, and inspiring environment where every child can thrive. We encourage all pupils to approach the term with enthusiasm, determination, and kindness toward one another.

Thank you, as ever, for your continued support. We look forward to a happy, productive, and successful term ahead.

Wishing you all a wonderful weekend – Mrs. Walker

Mindful Moments

May this summer bring you...

Sunshine that make you glow

Smiles that never get old

Breezes that kiss your face

Waves that wash your worries away

Memories that never fade

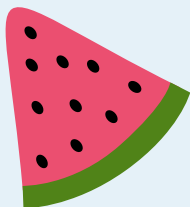


OurMindfulLife.com



Dojo Messages

- Welcome back
- Bio Blits May Half Term
- Essex Fire Museum open day
- Music Lessons at STM
- Community Drop in Sessions



A note from Mrs Walker

What a wonderful start we have had to the Summer Term!

It has been a real pleasure to welcome the children back into school following the Easter break. They have returned refreshed, enthusiastic, and ready to embrace their learning with positivity and energy.

Throughout the first week, there has been a noticeably calm, happy, and purposeful atmosphere across the school. Classrooms have been filled with curiosity and engagement, and it has been lovely to see the children settling quickly back into routines while demonstrating such positive attitudes towards their work and one another. The sense of joy around the school has been truly uplifting.

I would like to give a special mention to Acorn Class, who have shown great maturity and resilience as they welcome Mr Gatenby as their new teacher. They have made him feel incredibly welcome, and it has been wonderful to see how quickly they are adapting to this change. Their positive attitude, kindness, and willingness to embrace new routines are a real credit to them, and we are very proud of how well they have approached this transition.

We were delighted to welcome Miss Bailey to the school on Wednesday, where she spent time meeting the children and getting to know our community. Miss Bailey is the Executive Deputy Head across both Downham and St Mary's, and while she is usually based at Downham, she will be spending a little more time with us at St Mary's moving forward. It was important for the children to become familiar with her, and they thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to chat with her and share their learning. We look forward to seeing more of Miss Bailey in the coming weeks.



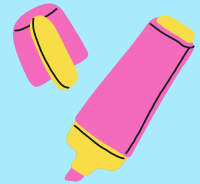
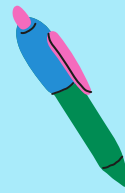
We are looking forward to building on this fantastic start as the term progresses, with many exciting learning opportunities ahead.

Please note – Forest School will be taking place on different days. Please do take the time to make a note of the changes below.

ACORN AND CHESTNUT – WEDNESDAY 22ND APRIL – Morning session celebrating Earth Day!
CHESTNUT – Thursday 23rd April, Morning session.
OAK – Residential, no Forest School this week.



THANKFULNESS ~ COMMUNITY ~ COMPASSION ~ TRUTHFULNESS ~ COURAGE ~ FORGIVENESS



Acorn Class

This Week In Class

Acorns have been truly welcoming to Mr Gatenby and have all been awarded for compassion in our values assembly. I am very grateful to them all for being so lovely and so willing to do some things in a different way. We have started our maths work on money and have been counting in twos, fives and tens so that we can add amounts of coins and pound notes. EYFS maths is focused on counting beyond ten and beginning to understand the teens numbers. We have planned and written animal poems as part of our new unit of work on All God's Creatures. In geography, we learned about the seven continents, began to learn The Continents Song and labelled these on a world map.

When studying history, the children were fascinated by the bravery of Grace Darling who rowed out in a tiny boat during a storm to rescue survivors of a shipwreck. The children sequenced the events of her bravery and some explained how special she was. In science, the children have been very successful when classifying minibeasts (or invertebrates) into two categories, for example 'can fly and can't fly' or 'has eight legs or more and has less than eight legs.' As artists, we began some work studying artists who are inspired by flora and fauna (plants and animals). Acorns Class are excellent at sketching and captured examples from the famous art pieces they were shown in excellent detail and use of space.

Achiever

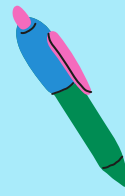
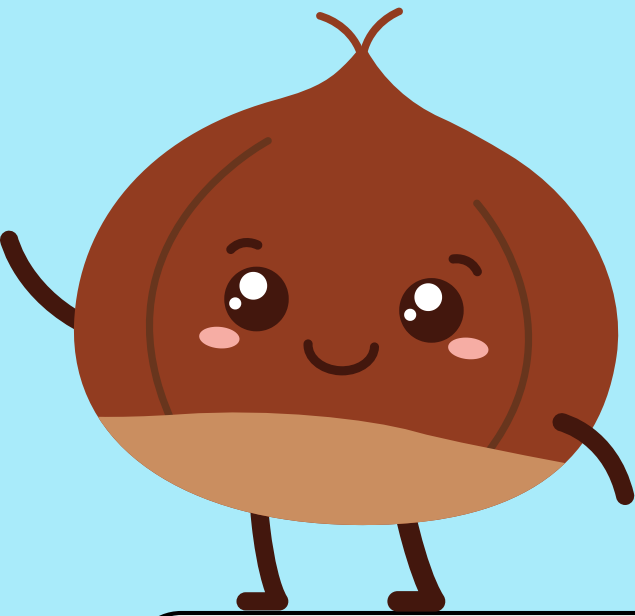
This week our work achiever goes to Harrison for his positive attitude to his work and his caring nature when supporting other children in the class.



Value Achiever

This week our value achiever goes to the whole class for their compassion and courage. They have returned to school with fantastic attitudes and have given Mr Gatenby a very warm welcome.





Chestnut Class

This Week In Class

It's the first week of the summer term and we have completed some fantastic work already! In English we learned about List Poetry. Everyone really enjoyed learning about it and produced some amazing poems! In maths we have been looking at fractions and decimals and seeing how the two relate to each other. For our Vipers reading session, the children looked at a non-fiction text about plants which linked nicely with our new science topic about plants. We have also started our next class text- The Iron Man by Ted Hughes. I've been really impressed with the number of children who chose to read a section aloud.

In PE with Mr Thomas, the children have started to do athletics which they really enjoyed. In PSHE we looked at our safety and age restrictions. We had to guess the age restrictions for a number of events- such as getting married or using YouTube and we were surprised by some of the answers. Our computing this half term is using Scratch and the children began by spending time looking at the different features of the website.

Achiever

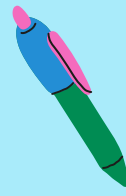
Alfie Crosby. He blew me away with his wonderful list poem. He used all of the key features and included wonderful ideas and descriptions and responded well to further challenges I gave him. Well done Alfie!



Value Achiever

Sophia. She has really drawn on her courage and tried really hard with her work. I have been very impressed with her attitude to learning and she confidently read aloud too!





Oak Class

This Week In Class

This week in Oak class, we have focused on summarizing information in our reading lessons and have identified the grammatical choices that make language formal. In maths, we have finished our unit on algebra, and have begun looking at the properties of shape, measuring angles. In history, we have looked at the chronology Ancient Greek civilisation and in science, we have learnt how the human circulatory system functions. In PSHE, we have looked at allergies and how to identify and support someone experiencing an allergic reaction.

Achiever

Oak's achiever this week is Olive. Olive is a delight to teach and completes everything with a smile on her face. She has produced work of the highest standard this week and even received a Headteacher's Award for her diagram and explanation of the functions of the human heart. Well done, Olive.



Value Achiever

Oak's value achiever this week is Sonny. Sonny consistently demonstrates all our school values and is universally liked and appreciated by all who interact with him. We are so lucky to have Sonny in our class and he is a credit to both himself and our school. Well done, Sonny.



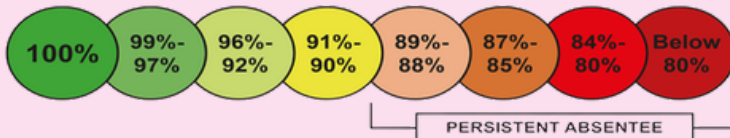


Attendance



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

On Time: First Time, Every Time



Which CIRCLE are you in?



THIS WEEK

Reception	71%
Year 1	96%
Year 2	89%
Year 3	98%
Year 4	98%
Year 5	100%
Year 6	84%

TARGETS

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

National Attendance Target is: **93.5 %**

Whole School Attendance this week is: **91%**

Pupils with 100% attendance this week: **48**



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

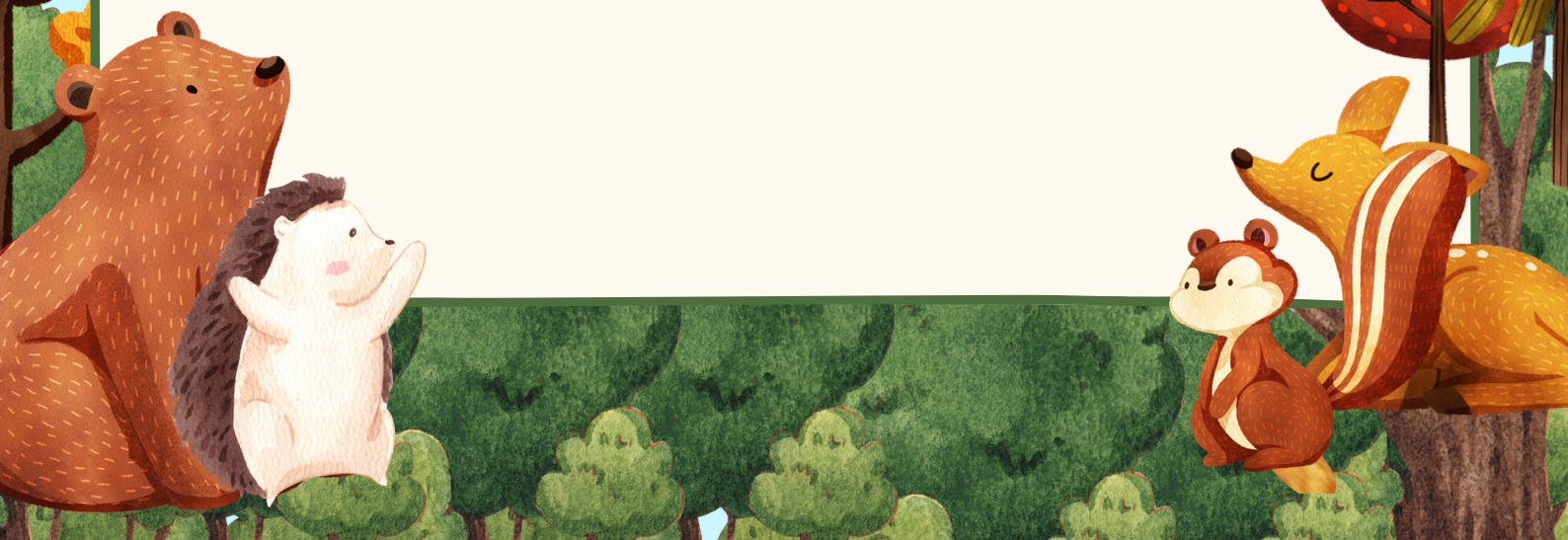
Acorn class were excited to get back to Forest School and we headed down to the Forest School area for a campfire. We discussed the Forest School rules and reminded each other how we need to behave in order to stay safe and enjoy our natural environment. The children all toasted their own marshmallows and the majority of them sandwiched their toasted marshmallows between two chocolate biscuits to make s'mores. The children enjoyed exploring our outdoor space digging in the digging area, playing in the mud kitchen, bug hunting and colouring in some trees using giant chalks. We finished the session with a game of Cuckoo on the field before heading indoors to get changed and ready for lunch. A superb start to the new term Acorn class, well done!

Chestnut class were also very excited to get back to Forest School and we also reminded each other of the rules and safety aspects of being outdoors. The children had the opportunity to start planting vegetables in our allotment and we planted potatoes, tomatoes, carrots and strawberry plants. Our aim is to use these vegetables and fruit to harvest and cook over a campfire at the end of the summer term. The children also enjoyed some free play-time where they played in the mud kitchen, climbed trees and explored our natural environment. A lovely start to this term Chestnut class, well done!

Oak class had a fantastic start to Forest School this term and they also had the opportunity to plant in our allotment. We planted more potatoes and strawberries as well as garlic and courgettes. We plan to use the garlic to make garlic flatbreads towards the end of the summer term. The children took part in various other activities during free-play time, such as creating dishes in the mud kitchen, digging in the digging area and bug hunting. A very productive session Oak class, well done!

Freddie Forest Bear has woken from his hibernation and is now looking forward to going home with Luna from Acorn class for the weekend. Luna is one of the most active and adventurous children at Forest School and she always gets involved in every activity that we have available. During the last session of last term, Luna made such a huge effort tidying and sorting Acorn class's outdoor area and she had some lovely ideas of things we could do to improve it. This week Luna also stood out and spent the whole session with a smile on her face. She helped her friends with things they were doing, sang songs to make everyone happy and as she did in last term's final session, Luna tidied up and packed away tools and equipment that she hadn't even been using or playing with, without having to be asked. Well done Luna, you should be very proud of yourself. Enjoy your weekend with Freddie!

Miss Wilson
Forest School Lead



Collective Worship

THIS WEEK

This week, Mr Gatenby led our collective worship with a thoughtful focus on our core value of truthfulness, encouraging the children to reflect deeply on what it means to be honest in their daily lives.

To begin, the children were asked to pair up and chat what truthfulness meant to them personally. They explored whether they found it easy or difficult to always tell the truth and shared their ideas with great enthusiasm. Many spoke about situations where honesty comes naturally, as well as moments when telling the truth can feel challenging.

Mr Gatenby then guided the children to think more carefully about different situations: when is it especially important to be truthful, and why can it sometimes feel hard to do so? These discussions helped the children recognise that being honest is not always simple, particularly when they may feel worried about consequences or unsure of the outcome.

To deepen this reflection, Mr Gatenby shared the story of King David, focusing on the moment when David admits, "I have sinned against the Lord." He asked the children to consider whether it would have been easy for David to speak such honest words. Through this, the children explored the idea that truthfulness often requires courage, especially when it means admitting mistakes.

Mr Gatenby reminded the children that times of uncertainty—when we hesitate about whether to tell the truth—are often the moments when honesty matters most. He encouraged everyone to reflect on a time in their own lives when they had to make a choice about being truthful, helping them connect the message to their own experiences.

The worship concluded with a prayer, asking for guidance and strength to be truthful, even when it feels difficult. It was a meaningful and reflective session that supported the children in understanding the importance of honesty and the courage it can require.

**And David said to
Nathan, I have sinned
against the LORD. And
Nathan said to David,
The LORD also has put
away your sin...**

—2 Samuel 12:13



UPCOMING EVENTS

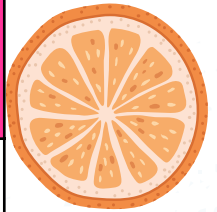
Date	Activity	Who
13th April	Return to School	Whole School
22.04.26 – 24.04.26	Year 5 & 6 Residential – Danbury Outdoors	
22.04.26	Earth Day A.M	Acorn & Chestnut
30.04.26	Trust Orienteering – The Willows Primary School	Selected pupils
01.05.26	Inset Day	Whole School
04.05.26	May Bank Holiday	Whole School
06.05.26	Acorn class trip – Call of the Wild	Acorn Class
11.05.26	Year 6 SATS	Year 6
05.06.26	Swimming lessons - 6 weeks	Year 5 & 6

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.

**Clubs Commence on Monday 13th April 2026
and run up to Friday 15th May**

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

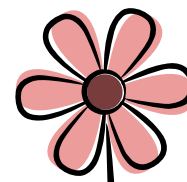
This after school club is available for Year 6 and will be run by Mr Austin
(This will be managed in groups throughout the year)





Friends of St Mary's School

FOSMS



Welcome Summer!

Let's embrace the sunshine and fresh beginnings
the world feels lighter when Summer arrives!

Coins in a bottle

We are looking forward to sharing the winning class with you next week. Who is it going to be!

Watch this space.



Grants

We may be a little quieter over this half term, but fear not we are busy working hard in the background trying to source grants and funding to see if we can raise enough for the playground to be updated. We will keep you to to date with our progress. If you hear of any grants you think would be open to us please do let us know!

Easter Raffle

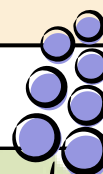
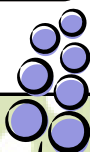
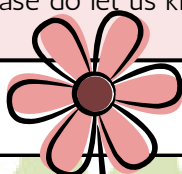
Thank you all for your support of the Easter Raffle. We made over £250, which is just amazing! With the money we raised we are going to fund a special music day for the children in celebration of world music day in June.



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 VACANCIES

MARCH 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.

Merrylands Primary School and Nursery

Catering Assistant. Applications close 17th April 2026. Interviews week commencing 27th April 2026. Lead Teacher for Autism Spectrum Conditions. Applications close 19th April 2026. Interviews week commencing 27th April 2026.

Whitmore Primary School and Nursery

Assistant Headteacher. Applications close 27th April 2026. Interviews 30th April 2026. Family Support Officer. Applications close 29th April 2026. Interviews 8th May 2026

