



Newsletter – Friday 18th September 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 – Compassion

Welcome

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

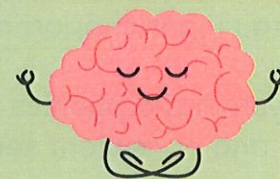
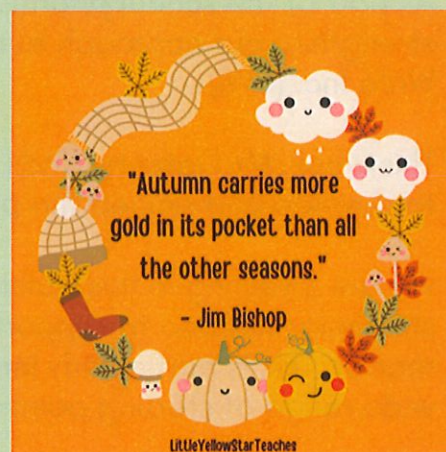
Welcome to this week's newsletter. I hope you enjoy taking a few moments to catch up on all the wonderful things that have been happening across our school.

As always, thank you for your continued support in helping your children to learn and thrive. You may have seen that we have implemented a new phonics system in school. One of the simplest and most valuable ways you can support learning at home is by reading little and often with your child. Whether it is sharing a bedtime story, listening to your child read, talking about a book together, or simply enjoying stories and books as a family, these small moments make a significant difference. Reading helps to develop vocabulary, confidence, imagination and a lifelong love of learning.

Thank you, as ever, for your partnership and for everything you do at home to support your children and our school community.

Warmest wishes,
Mrs Walker

Mindful Moments



Dojo Messages

- KidAround Magazine
- October half term Bikeability
- Christmas Panto
- Allergy Awareness
- Collective Worship
- Read Write Inc update
- Secondary School Admissions
- Kids Inspire Holiday Club



A Note from Mrs Walker

What a wonderfully productive and successful week!

Our new Reception children have stayed to join us for lunch this week and have settled in beautifully. They have particularly enjoyed sampling Mrs Richardson's delicious cooking! We are delighted with how well they are getting to know the school and are looking forward to welcoming them for the whole school day from next week.

This week, myself and Mr Gatenby attended Read Write Inc. training as we begin the implementation of our new phonics programme. We are very excited about this next step in developing our early reading provision and supporting our children to become confident, enthusiastic readers.

We were also delighted to welcome Rev. Jacqui into school this week to lead our collective worship. The children enjoyed coming together to listen, reflect and learn, and we are very grateful to Rev. Jacqui for spending time with us.

We would be grateful if all parents and carers could take a few moments to read the attendance page in this week's newsletter. Regular school attendance helps children stay connected to their learning, friends and school community. Getting back into good routines at the start of term can help your child have a positive and successful year.

Please do note the change to FOREST SCHOOL sessions this coming week.
Acorn Class, Friday AM session.
Chestnut Class, Thursday PM session.
Oak Class, Thursday AM session.

Read Write Inc. Phonics

A Focus on Early Reading – Implementation of Read Write Inc.

As part of the school priorities we shared with you last week, we are continuing to strengthen our approach to reading and phonics through the implementation of Read Write Inc. (RWI).

This week, Mr Gatenby and I have been attending Read Write Inc. training as we continue to develop and embed the programme across school.

We are investing in this training to ensure that all staff have the knowledge, skills and strategies needed to support every child to become a confident, fluent and enthusiastic reader. This is particularly important for us as we have children joining our school with a wide range of starting points and previous learning experiences.

The training is supporting us to develop:

 Systematic phonics teaching – ensuring children learn and apply sounds through a clear and consistent sequence.

 Teaching matched to need – children are taught according to their phonics stage rather than simply their age, allowing gaps to be identified and addressed.

 Support for children who need additional help – including effective intervention strategies and approaches for children with SEND.

 Greater participation and engagement – developing consistent teaching strategies and routines that encourage every child to actively participate in their learning.

 Reading across the curriculum – ensuring that the skills children develop through phonics and reading support their learning in all areas of the curriculum.

 Reading for pleasure – continuing to develop a culture where children enjoy reading, talk about books and see themselves as readers.

This is an important part of our ongoing work to raise standards in reading and ensure that every child can access learning successfully, whatever their starting point.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support with reading at home. Reading little and often makes a huge difference!  



Acorn Class

This Week In Class

This week in Acorn Class, we are very proud that the Reception children stayed here for their lunch every day, leaving a whole hour later. We're looking forward to next week when it will be all day!

Our Read Write Inc Phonics in Reception and in Year 1 and 2 has been progressing nicely, with Reception learning a sound a day and Year 1 and 2 working on digraphs and trigraphs (or Special Friends!)

In maths, Reception have been playing counting games and beginning to recognise and write numbers. Year 1 and 2 have worked hard on finding one more and one less of a number up to 20 - this is trickier than it sounds. Please take time to ask children for example "Which number is made up of 10 and 6? What is one more? What is one less?" because it takes time for this to be really embedded.

Reception have been learning to form the single-letter (Set 1) sounds they have learned, so far m, a, s, d, t, i and n. Year 1 and 2 have continued to write a four-part story in every writing lesson.

Year 1 and 2 enjoyed their RE lesson this week, learning about the link between the senses and religious belief. We learned more about the Hindu culture and the shrines that are used to worship their gods (which are actually one god that is represented through millions of other gods). We asked lots of questions and recorded these.

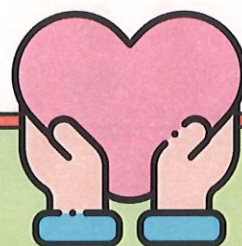
Love Your Learning

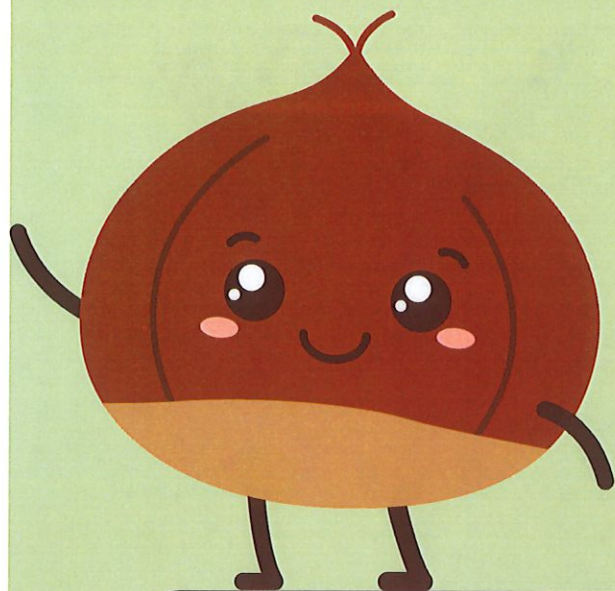
Loved your learning this week goes to Lilly-May! Every adult at St Mary's has noticed that Lilly-May has grown in confidence and her abilities across the curriculum recently. She is asking to read throughout the school day, writing neatly with good spellings and correct punctuation and has progressed significantly in maths. Well done Lilly-May!



Caught You Caring

This week Esther-Ruby was Caught Caring. Esther-Ruby has been helping the Reception children out on to the playground or field after they have finished their lunch. Thank you Esther-Ruby!





Chestnut Class

This Week In Class

Everyone has worked very hard this week. In reading we were learning about the Stone Age. In English we have looked at how to write a Buddy Story and started to write our opening paragraph. In maths we have continued with TTRS and looking at Place Value up to 10,000. In science we are continuing to look at rocks and have looked at the three different types. We really enjoyed our history lesson as we started to look at a timeline of the Stone Age. We had to sort and organize the information in groups in the hall. In computing we continued to spend time learning to log on and open TTRS and again year four children were very helpful.

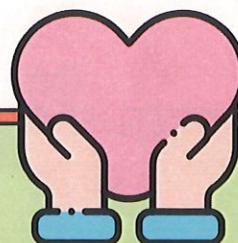
Love Your Learning

Loved your learning this week goes to Maddie. Maddie has written a wonderful opening to her Buddy Story. She really listened and took the advice given on board and presented her work beautifully as well. What a great start to year four!



Caught You Caring

This week Amelie was caught caring. Amelie noticed that someone had dropped something and she picked it up for them and made sure they got it back. Well done Amelie!





Oak Class

This Week In Class

This week in Oak class, we have focused on identifying the meaning of vocabulary in the context of the text in our reading lessons and learnt about the correct use of homophones, as well as how to correct form contractions our writing lessons. In maths, we continued learning about place value, comparing and ordering whole numbers as well as how to round numbers to the nearest 10, 100, 1000. In Spanish we have learnt how to say the months of the year and in history we have compared and contrasted the educational experiences of children in the Victorian era to the modern day. Our RE lesson was securing our understanding of religious view points and the reasons people may strongly believe or disbelieve without concrete evidence.

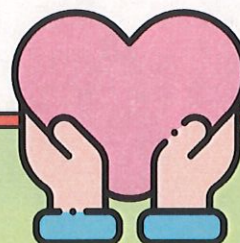
Love Your Learning

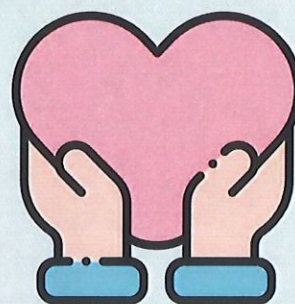
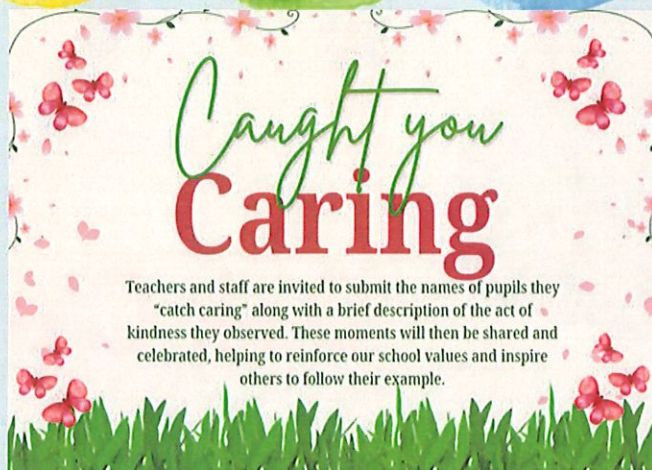
Oak's love your learning achiever this week is Sophie. Sophie has really stood out for her consistent effort and application this week. She has persevered when she has found things tricky and has kept a smile on her face throughout. Well done, Sophie.



Caught You Caring

This week Amelia was caught caring. Every day Amelia helps the younger children in breakfast club, she shows kindness and compassion and is such a help. Amelia makes Breakfast Club a joy to be a part of. Well done Amelia!





Adeline Taylor

Adeline was caught caring lots this week, she is consistently very polite, thoughtful and thinking of others.
Well done Adeline!

Axel Grace

Axel was caught caring helping to stack the chairs after lunchtime.
Well done Axel!

Oliver Bennet

Oliver was caught caring spending his time running a lunchtime paper aeroplane making club, a very thoughtful gesture that lots of children enjoyed.
Well done Oliver!

Lilly-May Smith

Lilly-May was caught caring helping the Reception children onto the playground or field after they had eaten their lunch.
Well done Lilly-May!

Olive Bond

Olive was caught caring when she volunteered to help Mrs Wells tidy up the main hall after lunch.
Well done Olive!

Hudson Meakings

Hudson was caught caring noticing that another child was upset and helping to comfort them. Well done Hudson, what a lovely friend you are!

Eve Denny

Eve was caught caring showing an EYFS child where to get their cutlery from at lunchtime.
Well done Eve!

Amelia Richardson

Amelia was caught caring playing with the EYFS children at lunchtime and helping them to make friends.
Well done Amelia!





Attendance

Supporting Your Child's Attendance This Term - A good start to the term can make a big difference.

Regular school attendance helps children stay connected to their learning, friends and school community. Getting back into good routines at the start of term can help your child have a positive and successful year.

Helping your child get into a good routine

Simple routines at home can make mornings easier and help your child arrive at school on time. You may find it helpful to:

- Prepare school uniform, bags and equipment the night before.
- Establish a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Allow plenty of time to get ready and travel to school.
- Talk positively with your child about coming to school.
- Let us know if there are any difficulties that are making it harder for your child to attend regularly.
-



What if your child is unwell?

We understand that children do become ill, particularly during the autumn and winter months. If your child is unwell, please check the NHS guidance "Is my child too ill for school?" to help you decide whether they should attend.

If you're unsure or your child is experiencing difficulties that are affecting their attendance, please speak to us. We are here to support you and your child.



Every day matters

Missing even a small amount of school can have an impact on learning and friendships. In 2024, 55% of pupils who missed some of the first week of term went on to be persistently absent.

This is why starting the term well and maintaining regular attendance throughout the year is so important.

If something is making it difficult for your child to attend school regularly, please talk to us as early as possible. Working together, we can help your child get the support they need and make the most of their time at school.

Thank you for supporting your child's attendance and helping them to have the best possible start to the term.





Attendance



ATTENDANCE MATTERS

On Time: First Time, Every Time



Which CIRCLE are you in?



THIS WEEK

Reception	81%
Year 1	83%
Year 2	90%
Year 3	91%
Year 4	87%
Year 5	94%
Year 6	99%

TARGETS

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

National Attendance Target is: **93.5%**

Whole School Attendance this week is: **89.22%**

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:

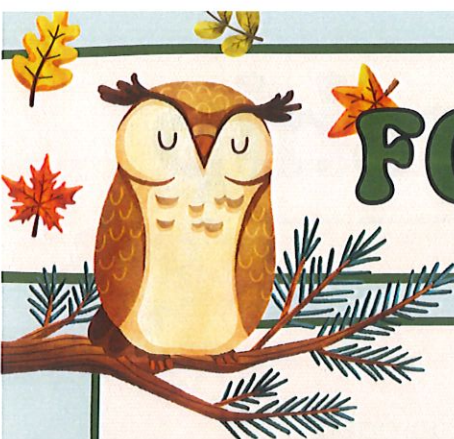
- Contact the school via Studybugs on the first day of absence before 9.00am . (This is our preferred method of communication for sickness absence)
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9.00am;
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible.

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



This week at Forest School we set sail on an exciting Pirate Week adventure! In each class, the children were split into two pirate crews and challenged to take part in a treasure hunt around the Forest School area. Working together as a team, they searched high and low for the little treasure chests that had been hidden around the site. The children showed great excitement and enthusiasm as they followed clues, explored the area and worked together to discover their hidden treasure.

Once the treasure had been found, each pirate crew was given the challenge of building their very own pirate ship using loose parts and natural resources. The children used their imaginations and creativity to design and construct their ships, working together to decide what materials to use and how to put their ideas into practice. There was lots of teamwork, problem-solving and imaginative play as the children transformed natural materials and loose parts into their very own pirate vessels.

The children then had plenty of time for free play, making the most of the Forest School environment. They enjoyed exploring the mud kitchen, climbing trees, building dens and creating their own imaginative games and adventures. It was wonderful to see the children using the space independently, developing their creativity and confidence while enjoying time outdoors with their friends.

To finish our Pirate Week sessions, Chestnut and Oak class faced one final challenge - "Shark Infested Waters!" Each team had to make their way from one end of the field to the other without stepping into the shark-infested water (the grass!). They were only allowed to use two large pieces of cardboard per team, meaning they had to carefully plan their movements, communicate with one another and work together to move the cardboard along. There was plenty of laughter, excitement and some very creative teamwork as the children attempted to reach safety without being caught by the sharks!

Freddie Forest School Bear had a lovely time with Oliver last week and is now looking forward to going home with Tommy-George from Oak class. Tommy-George joins Mrs Valentine and myself for every forest school session and yet his enthusiasm and commitment never falters. Despite either doing the same, or very similar activities with each class, Tommy-George never takes over and always listens to the ideas of the other children in the class. This week in particular, during the treasure hunts, it was obvious that Tommy-George knew where some of the treasure was hidden, yet he stood back and let the other children find them. Tommy-George is proving to be a very kind and compassionate young man and it is a pleasure to have him at forest school. Well done Tommy-George, enjoy your weekend with Freddie!

Miss Wilson
Forest School Lead



Collective Worship

This week...

This week, Rev. Jacqui led our collective worship and encouraged the children to think about how it feels when someone says, "Thank you."

Rev. Jacqui explained that when we say thank you, we are showing someone that we have listened, noticed and appreciated their kindness. She asked the children to think about who had helped them that day, and they were able to share lots of wonderful examples of people who had supported and helped them.

The children then thought about how it feels to be noticed, appreciated and thanked, and Rev. Jacqui encouraged them to make this a habit in their daily lives.

She shared Jesus' words from Matthew 7:12:

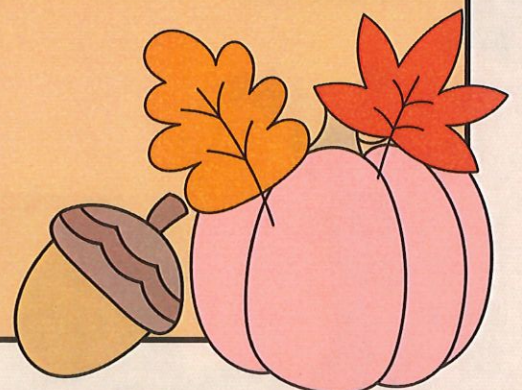
"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you..."

The children explored the Golden Rule: we should treat other people in the same way that we would want to be treated.

Rev. Jacqui also taught the children how to sign the words "thank you" in sign language. Everyone had a go and discovered that we do not always need to use words to show someone that we are thankful. The children also had fun learning how to say "thank you" in different languages.

Rev. Jacqui encouraged everyone to think about who they could notice, appreciate and thank today, and to remember to thank God for the people in our lives who do so much for us.

The children sang Thank You together before ending the worship with a prayer, asking God to help us remember to thank the people who help and care for us.





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 12th October.

Please note – No Clubs W/C Monday 19th
October due to parent / teacher conferences
with the exception of Multi Skills Club!

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!

Our AGM is Coming Up!

Our Annual General Meeting will be taking place this Autumn, with the date to be confirmed very soon.

The AGM is a great opportunity to look back on what FOSMS has achieved over the past year, share plans and ideas for the year ahead, and elect our committee for 2026/27.

Last year was a hugely positive one for FOSMS, with **over £18,000 of investment** secured for St Mary's through fundraising, grants and wider support for the school community. We're excited to keep building on that momentum in the year ahead.

This year, the following committee roles will be available:
Chair • Vice Chair • Treasurer • Vice Treasurer • Secretary

You do not need previous PTA experience to get involved – just an interest in supporting the school and being part of a friendly team.

If you might be interested in one of the roles, would like to know more about what is involved, or would simply like an informal chat, please do get in touch. We would be very happy to hear from you.

[✉ contact@fosms.co.uk](mailto:contact@fosms.co.uk)

Coins in a Jar

Next week is the week we bring back Coins in a Jar! 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!

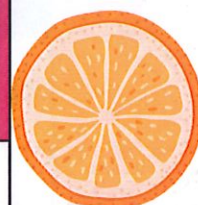
contact@fosms.co.uk

NEW TERM MENU

This is our new Autumn Term menu which begins on 3rd September and runs through to taking us right up to October half term. 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 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	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



UPCOMING EVENTS

Date	Activity	Who
08.10.26	Trust Poetry Slam Celebration	Selected pupils
19-23.10.26	No after school clubs this week	Multiskills to run as usual
19.10.26	Parent / Child Consultations 3.30pm–6.00pm	No clubs
20.10.26	Open Day—09:30–11:00	Non SEND Prospective Parent Tour
20.10.26	Parent / Child Consultations 3.30pm–5.00pm	No clubs
21.10.26	Parent / Child Consultations 3.30pm–5.00pm	No clubs
23.10.26	Harvest Festival Yr 6 pupils to present care home with food hamper	All welcome 2pm -3pm
26-30.10.26	Half Term	Whole Shool
02.11.26	Trust Inset Day	Whole Shool
09.11.26	School Photos	Whole School



BERLESDUNA
ACADEMY TRUST

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.

Downham Church of England Primary School

Midday Assistant. Applications close 24th September 2026.
Interviews 1st October 2026.

Merrylands Primary School and Nursery

Class Teacher (Fixed Term Contract) x 2. Applications close 27th September 2026. Interviews 5th October 2026.

Whitmore Primary School and Nursery

Midday Assistant. Applications close 28th September 2026.
Interviews 5th October 2026.

Class Teacher (part-time). Applications close 5th October 2026.
Interviews week commencing 11th October 2026.

