



Vernham Dean Gillum's Church of England Primary School Newsletter



Creating compassionate, courageous, creative citizens for the future in God's love

March 2026

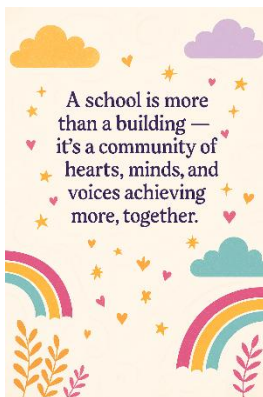
This week we celebrated World Book Day at school – always a favourite day of the year and a wonderful opportunity to celebrate reading together. A love of the written word is one of our key reading principles, and a reading for pleasure ethos runs like a golden thread throughout our small school with a big heart.

Thank you so much for supporting the day and helping the children with their fantastic costumes – we really do appreciate it. We are equally grateful for the support you give with reading at home. Regular reading really does make a huge difference: it helps develop fluency, builds confidence and, most importantly, encourages a lifelong love of books.

Over the last few days (apart from this afternoon!) it has also begun to feel as though spring is on its way. Crocuses, snowdrops and daffodils are starting to appear, and our school pond is now full of frogs, which has been fascinating for the children to observe. We are incredibly lucky to have such beautiful school grounds for the children to enjoy and learn in.

Thank you to the parents who attended the joint quiz evening with Little Fingers in the village last Saturday. Funds raised will go towards further improvements to our school grounds. Well done as well to the school team, who were victorious on the night!

Mrs B



Safeguarding

For children with Android devices, Google Family Navigating the 'First Phone' Milestone

As our children grow more independent, many of us start to ask the same question: *Is my child ready for a phone?*

Whether your child is starting to walk home alone or is simply asking because "everyone else has one," the decision to provide a mobile phone is a big step for any family. There is no right or wrong age—every child is different—but there are ways we can make the transition safer and more positive.

Based on recent guidance from the **NSPCC**, here are some tips for navigating online safety as your child gets their first device:

Is it the right time?

Before handing over a device, it's helpful to consider your child's maturity. Can they follow boundaries? Do they know who to talk to if something worries them? Some parents choose to start with a "feature phone" (which only allows calls and texts) or a shared family device before moving to a smartphone.

Setting Healthy Habits

If you decide to go ahead, the NSPCC suggests these four steps to keep things safe:

1. **Talk Regularly:** Don't make "the talk" a one-off event. Ask them what apps they like or what videos they've seen. If they feel they can talk to you about the fun stuff, they'll be more likely to come to you when something goes wrong.
2. **Use the TRUST Toolkit:** A great tip from the NSPCC and Vodafone is to use the "TRUST" acronym:
 - o **T**alk about who they share their number with.
 - o **R**emember that personal info stays private.
 - o **U**nderstand that they should think before sharing photos.
 - o **S**afety first—check if something feels right.
 - o **T**ell an adult if they are unsure.

3. **Explore Safety Tools Together:** Sit down with your child to set up privacy settings. Show them how to block and report, and explain that these tools are there to empower them, not just to restrict them.
4. **Stay Calm:** If your child comes to you with a mistake they've made online or something upsetting they've seen, try to react calmly. If they know they won't "get in trouble" or have their phone confiscated immediately, they will be much more honest with you in the future.



Useful Resources

If you are looking for more support, the NSPCC website has an excellent **Decision Tool** created with Vodafone to help you weigh the pros and cons for your specific situation.

Find out more at: nspcc.org.uk/onlinesafety

School Christian Value



This half-term our spotlight is on the Christian value of Justice. Our daily act of worship is based on a theme linked to justice.

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute." Proverbs 31:8

World Book Day

Yesterday we celebrated our love of reading for World Book Day. The children came to school dressed as their favourite book characters, while the staff transformed themselves into characters from *The Wizard of Oz*.

Throughout the day, the children took part in a range of exciting activities. They shared and discussed their favourite books and genres, planned sequels to stories they love and turned their ideas into comics, and designed their own bookmarks.

It was a wonderful day celebrating reading, and a fantastic time was had by all.



School Pond

We are delighted to share that frogs and frogspawn have appeared in our school pond. The children are very interested in observing this exciting sign of spring.

We kindly ask parents to remind children not to throw anything into the pond after school, so we can protect the wildlife living there. Thank you for your support.

Free School Meals

Your child may be eligible for **Free School Meals** if you receive any of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
- The guaranteed element of Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit (provided you are not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit)
- Universal Credit (if you apply on or after 1 April 2018, your household income must be less than £7,400 a year after tax, not including any benefits you receive)

If you think you may be eligible, you can apply using the following link:

<https://apply.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/hants>

If your child qualifies for Free School Meals, **the school also receives additional funding**, which helps us to provide further resources and support for pupils.

Wraparound Care Update

We are pleased to share that we are now fully compliant for Premier Sports to begin offering wraparound care on our school premises.

They are currently recruiting a Wraparound Care Manager so that we can begin offering this provision to families.

If you, or someone you know, may be interested in this role, please contact the school office, who will be able to provide further information on how to apply.

Parent Governor Vacancy

We are currently looking for a dedicated and enthusiastic parent or carer to join the Governing Board of Vernham Dean Gillum's Primary School as a Parent Governor.

This is a rewarding voluntary role that provides an opportunity to contribute to the strategic leadership and continued success of our school.

If you are interested or would like to find out more about the role, please contact Miss Pauk in the school office, who will be happy to provide further information.

The closing date for applications is Friday 20 March.

Mother's Day Workshop

On Thursday 12th March, Colourful Kate from our PTA will be coming into school to run a Mother's Day workshop with the children. They will take part in a craft activity and create something special to take home for their mums for Mother's Day. A contribution of £5 per child has been requested and can be paid using the QR code on the poster below.



Easter Raffle



Our Easter Raffle will take place on Thursday 26 March.

We are currently collecting donations for raffle prizes. If you, or anyone you know, are able to donate a prize, we would be very grateful if these could be dropped off at the school office.

Thank you for your support.

REMINDERS

Rucksacks

Rucksacks should be brought into school for school trips and special activities.

For everyday school use, book bags are ideal. They're perfect for carrying your child's reading book, reading record, homework, and any letters that need to go home.

Thank you for helping us keep classrooms and cloakrooms tidy!

Snacks

Please provide your child with fruit, vegetables, or cheese for break time snacks.

Thank you for helping us keep snack time healthy and enjoyable for everyone!

Parking

When dropping off or picking up your child, please use the Burydeane car park.

We kindly ask that you refrain from parking in School Close, as this is a residential area, and please do not use the school staff car park.

Thank you for helping us keep our children and community safe.



March

- 10th - Parents Evening
- 11th - Owls Class Swimming Lessons
- 12th - Mother's Day Workshop (PTA)
- 18th - Owls Class Swimming Lessons
- 18th - Robin's Beep Beep Day
- 20th - Red Nose Day
- 24th - Easter Service at 2:30pm
- 25th - Kev's Comic Masterclass (in school)
- 26th - Easter Raffle Draw
- 26th - Work Showcase at 3:10pm
- 27th - Easter Egg Hunt at 3:00pm (PTA)
- 27th - Break up for Easter

May

- 11th - Y6 SATS Week
- 18th - Owls Class Trip to Stonehenge

INSET DAYS 2026

- Monday 23rd February
- Friday 3rd July

For the upcoming school holidays we have your child's sporting needs covered with two weeks of action. Our fun filled holiday course gives students the opportunity to sample a variety of sports from professional coaches. Tuesday Football, Dodgeball, Nerf Battle, Hockey Wednesday Football, Basketball, Dodgeball, Volleyball Thursday Football, Handball, Rounders, Tennis Students will require a packed lunch and refillable drinks bottle. Medals, certificates and prizes awarded daily for sporting excellence, attitude and progress. Groupings will be done by age with age appropriate training/matches delivered. drop off between 8.45am and 9am Collection between 3pm and 4pm from the school main hall. booking details <https://stow-sports.classforkids.io> The Stow Sports coaching team are qualified, insured, DBS checked and have many years experience delivering sports and activities with the aim of giving all the opportunity to practice, learn and have fun. Please contact Dean 07423498623 if your child is unable to attend/change of person to collect or any emergencies.

10 % off early bird discount for three day booking valid until Friday 6th march

Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

ENDEAVOUR KING CAMPUS

stow sports
SPORTS SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN

SPORTS CAMP

AGES 5-12 YEARS

WEEK 1
31ST MARCH, 1ST 2ND APRIL

WEEK 2
7TH, 8TH, 9TH APRIL

9AM TO 4PM

ACTIVITIES:
Volleyball Hockey
Basketball Nerf Battle
Football Rounders
Tennis Dodgeball
Handball

<https://stow-sports.classforkids.io> Stowssportsschool@gmail.com

